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SELECT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE LITERATURE REVIEWS

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Prepared under Contract No.: GS-10F-0033M / 7200AA18M00016, Tasking N008

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(MAY 2020)

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ACRONYMS

FDW	Female Domestic Workers
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgendered
NASVI	National Association of Street Vendors of India
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NORC	NORC at the University of Chicago
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TCLF	Textile, Clothing, Leather, and Footwear
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against Women
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Global and Organizing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported literature review contributes to agency efforts to improve its understanding of gender-based violence (GBV) and its impact on the empowerment of girls and women. The review, an activity under the USAID Gender-Based Violence Learning Agenda, will inform agency programming and strategies. The current literature review focuses primarily on violence against women in the informal sector with a particular emphasis on three categories of informal workers: domestic workers, street vendors, and textile factory workers. The review does not follow a systematic review design and is not exhaustive of all literature, but includes a comprehensive selection of relevant literature published over the last 20 years from sources including academic organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, and other international agencies including non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The review is guided by the following research questions identified by USAID:

1) Do women working in the informal sector face greater violence than those working elsewhere?
2) If so, what drives this situation and how can it be addressed?

Women are in more vulnerable positions than men in many public and private spaces. Even in formal regulated work, mistreatment is common. In the informal economy, women find it harder to access preventive and protective measures, and thus, they are more exposed to violence and harassment than women who work in more regulated workspaces. The obstacles women workers face in the informal sector are just as diverse as the informal jobs they perform, and violence and harassment take different forms depending on the kind of work involved.

Generally, this report seeks to 1) define various key terms related to the characteristics and conditions of informal employment and violence in the workplace against women; 2) examine factors that may explain why women are more vulnerable in the informal workplace; and 3) review what is being done and what can be done to prevent and/or reduce violence against women in the informal sector.

Several key themes and recommendations emerge from the review:

- **The Legal System and Enforcement of Laws.** In order to reduce and prevent the violence women face in the informal economy, a multitude of stakeholders including enterprises, governments, non-governmental organizations, and worker committees should consider action in legal, public, and private spaces. Laws and regulations are required, but employers and workers also need training and advocacy awareness to ensure laws are effectively implemented.
- **Social Awareness Campaigns and Interventions.** Social-awareness campaigns and interventions to empower women may also help prevent violence against vulnerable working women. Strategies could address the many complex factors that make women vulnerable to violence in informal-sector work spaces, including prevailing gender norms and power imbalances. Development actors might encourage policies and approaches to economically empower women, such as education promotion, skills development and training, and financial inclusion.
- **Improved Public Services.** Actions to improve public services can also reduce women's vulnerability to workplace violence. For example, public childcare can reduce pressure on women who in many cases are forced to take on low-quality informal jobs, such as street vending, that allow them to take their children with them or have flexible hours. In addition, investments in urban infrastructure can create safer environments for women workers.
- **Collective Action.** Collective action and informal worker representation are critical for addressing work conditions. Informal workers engaging in collective action are challenged, however, in efforts

to obtain legal recognition of their work and for their organizations. In addition, informal workers tend to work in small numbers in scattered locations and can rarely afford monthly organization/union membership fees, so these organizations may struggle to generate administrative expenses required to operate. fforts might help unions link with other kinds of organizations, networks and associations that could provide skills trainings for women, as well as assistance with acquiring access to financial and material resources.

A two-page summary for this Literature Review can be found at: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XM4K.pdf.

INTRODUCTION

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the majority of workers (61 percent) worldwide work informally (ILO 2018b). Many are domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, or waste pickers. Informal work is the norm in developing countries, in both rural and urban areas.

Realizing women's rights at work requires access to employment with decent pay, safe working conditions and social protection. However, in large parts of the world, employment does not meet these criteria. Working in such conditions, informal workers are more vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological violence than in formal settings. The perpetrators might be criminals—or they might even be the employers or local authorities.

Gender plays a significant role in violence and harassment in the world of work, where women (and girls) are concentrated at the base of the economic pyramid, earning the lowest wages. As a result women are particularly vulnerable to experiencing dangerous and poor working conditions. As women face multiple barriers to formal employment, they gravitate towards informal, illegal, or precarious work in settings where they are even more likely to suffer gender-based violence (GBV) at the workplace.

GBV is a flagrant violation of human rights and excludes women from economic and political opportunity. GBV occurs in every region of the world and is a major obstacle for achieving not only gender equality, but also sustainable development, economic growth, as well as peace and justice. Within gender-based forms of violence, it is important to understand and confront violence and harassment in the world of work as it is a threat to the dignity, health and wellbeing of those who experience it and their families. On the other hand, GBV also undermines working environments, affects productivity, damages enterprise reputation and ultimately hinders a country's economic growth.

As a type of GBV, violence against women (VAW) in the workplace appears cyclical and related to exposure to other forms of aggression. Some studies argue that victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) tend to be engaged in informal legal and illegal activities (Pyles 2006), possibly because women who experience abuse are traumatized, less able to work in the formal sector and are generally more desperate to find ways to earn money.

This literature review presents a summary of the available evidence and literature, and seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) Do women working in the informal sector face greater violence than those working elsewhere? 2) If so, what drives this situation and how can it be addressed?

The summary is based on a rapid review of the international literature over the last 20 years. The methodology is based on online searches of main academic databases and gray literature, and visited websites of bilateral and multilateral donors, and other international agencies, including non-governmental organizations. Our approach does not follow a systematic review design and is not exhaustive of all literature. We start with core definitions and a brief description of the characteristics and conditions of informal employment and violence in the workplace against women. Next, we examine factors that may explain why women are more vulnerable in the informal workplace, in general, and more illustratively, in common settings such as street vending, domestic work, and informal industrial work, focusing primarily in the garment industry. Finally, we review what is being done and what can be done to prevent and/or reduce GBV against informal workers.

DEFINING KEY CONCEPTS

Informal work is often confused with "employment in the informal sector or economy." Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they are distinct. The latter is defined in terms of the employer—enterprises or individuals that are not recorded in local, state, or national registries and therefore provide no legal protection or recourse for workers (see "Informal economy" description below). "Informal work" considers the occupation or job itself. Workers may be self-employed or working for an informal employer, generally in temporary or part-time positions, and have no legal protection or recourse in the event of mistreatment by an employer or contractor.

The informal economy, according to the ILO Conference of 2002, refers to any economic activity performed by workers or economic units that occurs outside the formal reach of law. Participating workers can be self-employed or wage workers (ILO 2002). Self-employed persons work mainly in unregistered enterprises and perform activities like street vending, petty trading of goods or services, and subsistence farming. Wage workers in the informal economy are employed without legal and social protection; they hold part-time or temporary jobs, and their activities extend to domestic, contract, subcontracted, and seasonal agricultural work (UN Women 2015).

Violence against women (VAW) occurs in a context of unequal gender relations. Although not identical, violence against women and gender-based violence are similar and often used interchangeably. "Gender-based violence" encompasses women's experience of violence due to unequal gender power relations, but not exclusively: men may also be victims of violence due to gender, hence inclusion of the term "gender". Violence against women per se, is a form of gender-based violence.

Violence and harassment in the workplace result from an abuse of power and unequal power relations in work, family, or society (ILO 2017a). They take the form of physical assault and violence, verbal abuse, threats, abusive behaviors, bullying, mobbing, and psychological and moral harassment, whether it is sexualized or not. Discrimination-related violence affects vulnerable groups of workers such as women, minorities, or lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered (LGBT) people. The violence takes place not only in the workplace or work environment, but also at social events, conferences, meetings, training courses, and other places where business is conducted.

WOMEN AND INFORMAL WORK

In the era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), development professionals have formed a growing international consensus around the need to achieve gender equality. Women have made significant advances in access to employment and leadership positions. However, these changes have not yet resulted in equality in employment outcomes. Three-quarters of working-age men, 15 years and over, worldwide are in the labor force, compared to half of working-age women. Furthermore, women face significant earning gaps; globally, women's average earnings are more than 20 percent less than men's (ILO 2018a), and women also work in worse conditions (longer hours and less social protection and working rights such as vacations and insurance).

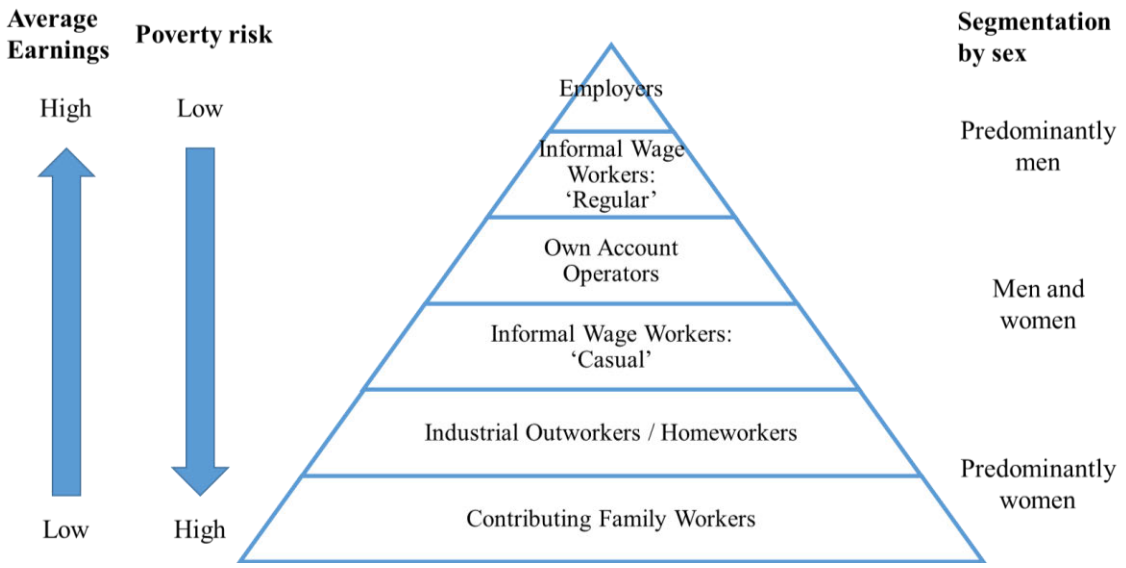
Worldwide, informal work is a greater source of employment for men (63 percent) than for women (58 percent) (ILO 2018b). However, there are regional differences, as women dominate the informal economy, namely in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, most countries in Southern Asia, more than half in Latin American and the Caribbean (excluding Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic), and in some countries in Southeast Asia (Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines).

In addition, within the world of informal employment, women tend to be employed in the least secure and lowest-paying occupations (i.e., domestic workers and self-employed home-based workers) (UN

Women 2015). However, the most vulnerable work category is unpaid family work in family businesses or on farms. Globally, women represent 63 percent of workers in these categories, where they go without direct pay in family businesses and/or farms (UN Women 2015). Men, on the other hand, dominate in the more protected and remunerative jobs (i.e., as informal employers or wage workers) (UN Women 2015).

Women in Informal Employment: Global and Organizing (WIEGO) visually represents informal employment in Figure 1 below. As the graphic demonstrates, men tend to dominate in the most secure jobs, while women dominate in the lowest-earning and highest-poverty-risk jobs. The composition of total employment worldwide divided by gender follows this pattern. While the percentages of men and women employees are almost the same (55 percent men and 57 percent women), employers are predominantly men (4 percent men and 2 percent women), as are own-account workers (36 percent men and 25 percent women). Contributing family workers, by contrast, are more often women (5 percent men and 16 percent women) (Bonnet et al. 2019).

Figure 1. WIEGO Model of Informal Employment



Source: WIEGO (2018)

WHY DO BARRIERS PERSIST?

Women face obstacles along multiple dimensions – including the social, cultural, legal sphere, among others – that prevent women from acquiring decent work and thereby place women in working conditions where they are vulnerable to violence. Lack of education is a common barrier to formal employment for both men and women. However, access to education is gendered. Thus, women with lower levels of education or work experience find it harder to access formal employment (Owino et al. 2016) or, inversely, are more likely to be involved in a precarious job.

Women also face greater conflicts in balancing family life with education and work. Young mothers tend to achieve lower levels of formal and non-formal schooling, even dropping out without achieving basic education in the case of teen pregnancies. Then, women often bear the load of unpaid childcare and domestic work, commonly leaving women with little choice but to take on low-quality jobs that allow them to attend to domestic responsibilities or to dedicate fully to domestic work and childcare (UN Women 2015). For women, demands of childcare and marriage reduce the probability of working, but being part of a female-headed household increases it. For men, having children reduces the probability of

being unemployed or unable to acquire education or training. For women, conversely, the probability of being involved in precarious work or being employed or unable to acquire an education or training increases (Alcázar et al. 2018).

Also, a range of discriminatory social and cultural norms may limit women's access to opportunities for education and skills development, freedom of movement, financial access, and land tenure (UN Women 2015). Several social, cultural or institutional barriers generate a gender gap in skills development, which in turn, contribute to the reproduction of gender inequalities in the labor market. Particularly, cultural norms often push women to typically "feminized" occupations or jobs with gendered traits that are undervalued by the society. Moreover, gender norms compromise the ability of women to acquire skills that are relevant to the labor market or may not allow them to attend trainings because of time constraints resulting from their household responsibilities. Even in the same informal sector, men and women perform different activities. For example, while men street vendors tend to sell non-perishable goods, women street vendors tend to sell perishable goods like fruits or vegetables. Men further have access to more capital than do women in the same jobs, thus men produce and sell a higher volume of products (Chen, Vanek, and Carr 2004).

Women also have a higher probability of remaining in the informal sector. A study in Vietnam found that young men who completed upper secondary school are more likely to switch from informal to formal work, while women, more frequently poorly educated, were the least likely to switch from informal to formal employment (McCaig and Pavcnik 2015). It is important to note that working informally could be a voluntary decision or could be out of necessity. Informal workers who stay in the sector out of necessity tend to earn lower wages (Günther and Launov 2012).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

The ILO identifies a series of factors usually associated with informal work environments that put women in risk of gender based violence (2016). They include:

- working in contact with the public;
- working with people in distress;
- working in situations that are improperly or not covered by labor law and social protection;
- working in resource-constrained settings (inadequately equipped facilities or insufficient staffing can lead to long waits and frustration);
- unsocial working hours (for instance, evening and night work);
- working alone or in relative isolation or in remote locations;
- working in intimate spaces and private homes; and
- working in conflict zones, especially providing public and emergency services.

Moreover, the massive informal labor force is typically excluded from legislation meant to protect laborers from harassment and violence at the workplace. Authorities not only disregard the abuse of informal workers, they are sometimes the perpetrators, assaulting informal workers, demanding bribes or sexual favors, or ordering evictions. Women and minority informal workers are at higher risk of suffering harassment and violence from local authorities (ILO 2016). Local authorities may also be indirectly responsible for violence, as they do not provide adequate infrastructure (poor lighting and unsafe transport stations) and protection.

Gender-based violence manifests in several ways in the informal employment, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Gender-Based Violence in the Informal Economy

Perpetrator	Street Vendors	Domestic Workers	Home-based Workers	Textile/Garment factory Workers
Clients / Users	- Harassment - Lewd comments - Physical Abuse - Unwanted physical contact - Beating - Sexual abuse	- The client is the employer		
Employers		- Harassment - Lewd comments - Physical Abuse - Unwanted physical contact - Isolation - Low wages - Slavery-like Contracts - Sexual abuse	- Holding of payments - Low wages	- Harassment - Lewd comments - Physical Abuse - Unwanted physical contact - Low wages - Overtime work - Isolation - Slavery like working conditions - Sexual abuse
State	- Harassment - Beatings - Evictions - Destruction of capital - Sexual favors	- Permits slavery-like contracts		- Permits slavery-like contracts
Household members	Intimate partner violence / familial violence	Intimate partner violence / familial violence	Intimate partner violence / familial violence	Intimate partner violence / familial violence
Others	- Lewd comments by other street vendors - Disputes over vending space - Robbery and assaults	- Verbal, physical or sexual abuse committed by the family or people known by the employers		- Violence outside work due to inconvenient working hours

Source: WIEGO (2018)

Indeed, women's exposure to violence differs throughout informal workplaces. The following section describes the conditions particular to occupations held by women informal workers. These cases are selected mainly for the significant presence of women in the sectors, the vulnerable conditions of the workplaces that commonly characterize the sectors, and the availability of relevant studies.

STREET VENDORS

Street vendors are a highly heterogeneous group in their products, services, and work conditions. They sell cooked and uncooked food, non-edible products, like clothes and utensils, and services such as hairdressing, shoe-shining, or repairs. They perform their work in a fixed or unfixed place, and with different degrees of capital. It is also a diverse group according to sex. In some countries like Bangladesh, Egypt, and India, for instance, the majority of street food vendors are men; in Nigeria, Senegal, Thailand, and the Philippines they are women (Cohen, Bhatt, and Horn 2000). Given the informal nature of their work, there are no clear estimates on how many street vendors exist around the world, but in South Africa, they are estimated to represent close to 15 percent of urban employment; in India, about 11 percent; Brazil, 3 percent; and Argentina only 1 percent (ILO 2013a). In the specific case of women, street vendors are mostly rural migrants (Berry 2009).

According to the available literature, the main difficulties that street vendors face in the workplace include environmental problems, as they are in the streets directly exposed to harsh weather conditions (Berry 2009); corruption and abuse by bad local actors; and conflict with local authorities due to the use of public space (Mahadevia et al. 2016; Etzold 2015; Castellanos 2014).

Given the vulnerable conditions in which women street vendors work, women suffer disproportionately from GBV. Most studies exploring this issue are based on small surveys in specific locations in developing countries, specifically in Africa and Southeast Asia:

- **Northern Mozambique**: a qualitative study found that all women street vendors (FSVs) interviewed suffered verbal violence in the form of lewd comments, and most (about 82 percent) were physically abused.[1] Sexual harassment and abuse by men clients also drive FSVs out of their usual vending places (Companion 2014).
- **South Africa**: in a survey of women in Johannesburg, South Africa, 25 percent of all women respondents reported suffering physical, sexual or psychological violence while working. In addition, 29 percent of the FSVs in the sample were victims of robbery (Pick, Ross, and Dada 2002).[2]
- **Burkina Faso**: according to a survey among Burkinabe women, half of respondents reported suffering sexual harassment.[3] Depending on the town, perpetrators of this harassment were mostly clients (83.6 percent in Bittou Town) or men co-workers (56 percent in Boromo Town) (Ouédraogo, Sisawo, and Huang 2017). Furthermore, the study reported extreme cases of violence, such as sexual abuse and rape go often underreported or covered up by the victims and their families (Ouédraogo, Sisawo, and Huang 2017).
- **South Sulawesi, Indonesia**: A qualitative study conducted notes that FSVs suffer from verbal, physical, and sexual violence; they are considered and treated as prostitutes, and thus believed to deserve such treatment. These women also suffer from domestic violence, such as beatings and insults from other family members (Ismail and Umar 2018).

Women street vendors have begun to form associations to raise awareness of their condition and have a say in policy. Associations are valuable in their ability to help street vendors organize and provide a mechanism for advocacy to authorities (Castellanos 2014). At the international level, there are two main organizations: StreetNet International, an international alliance of street vendors, and WIEGO. Both help organize their stakeholders to give them visibility and a voice, exchange information, and to support

[1] Results were based on responses of 72 women street vendors in five urban Mozambican settlements.

[2] The study included a survey of 422 women street vendors trading in 323 city blocks in Johannesburg, South Africa.

[3] The study included 264 participants in the survey and 16 interviewees.

street vendors and other informal groups that confront daily challenges in their places of work. The associations assist with advocacy to enact various legislation and ordinances that favor of street vendors. For example, advocacy of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) led to passage of the 2014 Street Vendors Act that established Town Vending Committees in every city that bind local authority action to the committees' recommendations. In Lima, Peru, the Red de Mujeres (Women's Network), established with the assistance of WIEGO, promotes women in leadership positions across different street vendors' organizations (Roever and Aliaga 2010).

DOMESTIC WORKERS

With over 52 million domestic workers estimated worldwide as of 2010 (ILO 2013a), this job category represents an important part of the informal economy. Domestic workers comprise 3.6 percent of global wage employment, with the highest percentages in Latin America and the Caribbean (7.6 percent) and the Middle East (5.6 percent) (ILO 2013a). Domestic workers, especially women, face precarious work situations and are vulnerable to violence and other abuse committed by their employers.

It is a highly feminized job sector: roughly 80 percent of all domestic workers are women. In addition, tasks differ by gender. While male domestic workers mostly work as gardeners, butlers, drivers, or security guards, women perform household chores and provide care to children, the elderly, and sick family members, normally in the employer's home (ILO 2013a). Workers range from part-time to full-time; from live-out to live-in; and from unskilled to skilled. Domestic work arrangements are mostly informal, without contractual agreements or application of laws and regulations. Pay is low and can be irregular. An ILO report on statistics and legal protection of domestic workers (ILO 2013b, 68), shows that for the 22 listed countries from America, Africa, Asia and one from Europe, the average wage of domestic workers ranges from 14 percent to 63.8 percent of average wages for all paid employees between years 2005 and 2012.

Yet, domestic work is an important source of work for immigrants, particularly. For example, around 20 percent of immigrants in Costa Rica, Chile, and Argentina are domestic workers, and around 58 percent of workers in personal and related services in the United States are immigrants from Latin America (ILO 2013a). Many enter into the work force at a young age, and thus domestic work is an entry into the workforce for many women.

The profiles of women domestic workers (FDW) around the world differ. In Africa, the few studies available show that FDWs are mostly poor, young rural migrants (Dinat and Peberdy 2007). A study of FDWs in Kenya found that most workers are rural (91 percent) and under 19 years of age (53 percent) and include a significant portion of child laborers (18 percent) (Nyabuti 2007). In Latin America, characteristics vary by country; in Peru the vast majority of FDWs are migrants from the rural Peruvian Andes (Viviano 2007), whereas in Argentina the majority of FDWs are immigrants from Paraguay (Bauleo, van Dijk, and Radon 2018).

Although studies use different indicators of GBV against FDWs, most measures refer to physical and sexual violence, and some evaluate verbal and psychological violence. Other forms of exploitation are associated with labor and contract terms, such as mandatory overtime, no working rights, and extremely low wages. For example, in the Middle East and North Africa, which has the world's second largest number of migrant FDWs estimated at 2.2 million (ILO 2015a), migrant work functions under the kafala system. Under kafala, a migrant worker's immigration and legal status is tied to an individual employer's sponsorship. The employee has no right to resign or transfer from the job or leave the country without the employer's permission (ILO 2017b).

The prevalence of violence differs between continents and countries. One study reported that in Nairobi, Kenya, 73 percent of FDW were verbally insulted, 37 percent physically assaulted, and 24.5 percent sexually assaulted (Nyabuti 2007). A study in Argentina found that about one in five FDWs suffered verbal or physical violence (Bauleo, van Dijk, and Radon 2018). Meanwhile, a study in Peru reported that about half of FDWs experienced psychological abuse, one in every ten FDWs suffered physical abuse, and three in every ten FDWs suffered sexual harassment (Viviano 2007).

Extreme violence resembling modern slavery is common and permitted by the state in Middle Eastern countries such as Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, but also in Malaysia (Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Huling 2012). FDWs also have to work in conditions of social isolation (Ullah 2015). Given the circumstances of their work and migration status, FDWs lack a support network and ways to establish social contacts (Viviano 2007; DeSouza and Cerqueira 2009).

Research indicates that a variety of factors contribute to FDW vulnerability to violence. The informal work arrangement with their employer is itself a source of vulnerability (Figueiredo, Suleman, and Botelho 2018). Living in the residence of work is yet another risk factor, as this makes the domestic worker more dependent on the employer and vulnerable to abuses. Ullah (2015) states, "Isolation in the household, lack of privacy and lack of conditions to ensure personal security place the migrant domestic workers at risk of sexual abuse" (pg.5).

Perpetrators of GBV towards FDWs differ depending on the type of violence exerted. Two studies suggest that the main perpetrator of psychological and physical violence tends to be the woman employer of the house (Ullah 2015; Viviano 2007). In the case of sexual abuse, most perpetrators are men (Ullah 2015; Viviano 2007).

Some studies provide evidence of the health consequences of violence against FDWs. The most prevalent consequences are stress, job dissatisfaction, general feeling of poor health, common mental disorders, fatigue, isolation, and others. A study of the wellbeing and mental health of immigrant FDWs in Singapore found that half the participants reported stress and 20 percent reported feelings of isolation or severe isolation, which were associated with poorer quality of life (Anjara et al. 2017). Further, two studies from Latin America directly linked GBV to poor health conditions. In Argentina, a cross-sectional study of 201 FDWs in Buenos Aires found physical or verbal violence at the workplace to be the main predictor of common mental disorders and poor general health (Bauleo et. al. 2018). A study of Brazilian FDWs (DeSouza & Cerqueira 2009) finds significant estimates that harassed FDWs (26 percent of the sample reporting some form of sexual harassment at work in the last 12 months) reported more self-esteem impairment, anxiety, and depression than non-harassed FDWs.

One of the main problems identified in studies across several countries is the lack of norms and regulatory frameworks governing domestic workers. More than 25 percent of domestic workers are completely excluded from labor legislation, and only about 10 percent have the same rights as other workers (ILO 2013a). Neetha and Palriwala (2011) argue that legislation is both a cause and effect of a fundamental shift in the recognition of domestic workers.

EMPOWERING FDWS

The most significant international treaty concerning the right of domestic workers is the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) of 2011. It addresses the basic needs and rights of domestic workers, including conditions and information of the work contract, the need for regular payment, a violence-free work environment and others. However, as of January 2020, only 29 countries are signatories to the convention.

FDWs can also seek empowerment and protection through social organizations. Collective bargaining and other forms of dialogue – evidenced by FDW unions and organizations engaging in promotion of violence-free work environments – endeavor to expand domestic workers' rights (ILO 2015b). Workers may also form cooperatives, worker-owned enterprises that provide different services including provision of job rosters, and assist with negotiating contracts, training, legal support and other services (ILO 2014). Brazil's National Federation of Domestic Workers, for example, promotes policies that recognize domestic workers (Gonçalves 2010). Elsewhere in South America, the National Federation of Bolivian Household Workers pursues the recognition and inclusion of domestic workers in labor laws in Bolivia (Castaño 2018).

INFORMAL INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Women work under informal and precarious conditions in other sectors apart from street vending and domestic work. The textile, clothing, leather, and footwear (TCLF) industry is a labor-intensive industry mostly located in Export Processing Zones (Wick 2010), and may involve home-based work. It employs an estimated 60 to 75 million people worldwide, of which three-quarters are women (Stotz and Kane 2015).

Although the TCLF industry involves famous brands with a dominant presence in the global supply chain, it is a consumer-based market where the buyer has the power to reduce prices. This pushes large producers to reduce costs and resort to precarious employment and informal arrangements through different forms of subcontracting (Ascoly 2004). The industry is characterized by long working hours and low pay with a gendered pay gap, particularly in developing Asian countries (Pillay 2018). The mean gender pay gap in those countries hovers around 18.5 percent and, in extreme cases, as in India and Pakistan the gap is around 422 and 57 percent, respectively.

Women workers in the TCLF industry are varied but segregated, through discrimination and gender stereotypes, between those who achieve formal employment and those who stay in informal employment. For example, women workers in Mexico's *maquiladoras*[4] are younger, while older women that start a family tend to switch from the tedium of the assembly line to self-employment. In general, women workers have low levels of education and are poor, which pushes them into accepting substandard, unsafe work conditions (Nasreen and Manzoor 2016). Moreover, subcontracting arrangements provide women with survival income, but do not allow capital accumulation. Women are hired because they are perceived to be docile and satisfied with lower pay (Nasreen and Manzoor 2016). Finally, poverty puts home-based women workers at risk of experiencing IPV due to tensions when income is insufficient. (Naqeeb, Saigol, and Azhar 2014).

In factories, managers and supervisors may have a gendered notion of acceptable behavior and thus may intimidate and abuse women (Ascoly 2004). Threats of physical violence are also used to control the women workers and are part of everyday operations in some factories. Specific forms of violence include intrusive searches to make sure women are not stealing (Tager 2016), sexual propositions with threats of being laid off (Wick 2010), being locked in the workplace, or withholding personal documents (ILO 2015c).

[4] A *maquiladora* is a factory that ensembles, transforms, or produces products for export. The concept originated in Mexico, where these factories were established to export to the United States.

Perpetrators of violence tend to be managers or supervisors in the factories, who are mostly men. A study of Bangladesh garment factories found that violence against women in the workplace was associated with factory culture (management styles, and adherence to laws around workers' rights), perpetrators' perceptions of women workers (indicated by their patriarchal gender attitudes and hierarchal attitudes), and whether they experience work-related stress. The same study found a correlation between suffering IPV and workplace violence (Gibbs et al. 2019).

Violence and harassment against women in the TCLF sector might be reduced by improving women's work and living conditions by paying living wages, establishing just and predictable working hours, and improving work safety. Fair Wear Foundation, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that engages in advocacy around harassment reduction in the international garment supply chain, developed a list of good business practices on the matter (Fair Wear Foundation 2018).

The pressure to meet quotas and deadlines likely leads the supervisors and managers to react with more verbal and physical violence. If buyers plan the production cycle across the year in order to reduce pressure on workshops to deliver on time during high-demand seasons, this could potentially reduce violence. Organizing the production schedule could also help to reduce the need for night shifts, when women are most vulnerable. It is also important to allow worker organization and establishment of communication channels with management in order to reach out and make complaints. It is also important for employers to establish anti-harassment committees where women can privately and safely denounce violence and discuss their issues, as well as harassment and training programs for managers and supervisors (Fair Wear Foundation 2018).

REGULATIONS TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE INFORMAL WORLD OF WORK

There are no absolute numbers of how many countries have regulations on violence and harassment in the world of work, but a comprehensive ILO report (ILO 2018c) on legislation in 80 countries reveals that 65 of the countries (81 percent) have work-related sexual harassment regulations, and 60 countries (75 percent) have work-related physical and psychological violence and harassment regulations.[5] A study by the World Bank counts 114 of 173 countries (65 percent) with legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace (World Bank Group 2015).

In June 2019, the ILO adopted Convention No. 190, Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Convention 190 represents an important victory for informal workers, especially women, because it establishes a broad definition of "work" that includes those working without formal contracts, and of "workplace" including both public and private spaces. In addition, the convention lays out measures that governments, employers and workers' organizations can take to prevent violence and harassment in the workplace and to support survivors of domestic violence and other forms of violence. The convention acknowledges that this type of violence has an impact on physical and mental health of the victims, and work consequences such as absenteeism, tardiness, job leaving and termination.

Of the 80 countries studied for the ILO report, 32 (40 percent) have regulations to prevent workplace sexual harassment that place responsibility on the employer to take steps to prevent or protect workers against sexual harassment, and prohibit workers, managers/bosses, or third parties from

[5] The vast majority of jurisdictions do not make the distinction between physical and psychological conduct, but rather refer to "conduct" or "behavior", terms wide enough to encompass physical and psychological conduct.

engaging in sexual harassment. Prohibition is also paired with means for the victim to denounce or report violence. Most countries, however, do not have regulations to prevent various forms of psychological violence and harassment in the workplace. Of the 80 countries studied, only 22 require employers to take steps to prevent this type of violence (ILO 2018c).

It is difficult to assess how the above legal advances have affected the prevalence of violence against women at work in general, and even less evidence is available if we narrow our focus to the informal world of work. Further, it is important to consider that in many cases, informal employers may not be beholden to such policies. However, these laws and international conventions do signal that workplace violence is unacceptable.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women are in more vulnerable positions than men in many public and private spaces. Even in formal regulated work, mistreatment is widespread. In the informal economy, women find it harder to get access to preventive and protective measures, and thus they are more exposed to violence and harassment than women who work in more regulated workplaces.

The problems women workers face in the informal sector are just as diverse as the informal jobs they perform, and violence and harassment take different forms depending on the kind of work involved. This literature review focused on three categories of informal workers: domestic workers, street vendors and textile factory workers. Although there is no information on what percentage of women informal workers comprise each of these three categories, they are, nevertheless, identified as important in the literature, and as where women are more prone to violence. Although information and studies are scarce and dispersed, there is evidence that in these three categories of informal work, women face gender-based violence and harassment. The studies examining this issue offer several recommendations.

THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS

In order to reduce and prevent the violence women face in the informal economy, enterprises, governments, non-governmental organizations, and worker committees need to take action in legal, public, and private spaces. Laws and regulations are required, but employers and workers also need training and advocacy awareness to ensure laws are effectively implemented. Enterprises should invest in workplace training. Even more important, governments and other actors could invest in and implement grievance procedures to help victims and to support them taking their cases to court. Nor should regulatory mechanisms and laws neglect those self-employed in the informal economy (e.g., street vendors and home-based workers). NGOs are important allies that can link victims with law-enforcement agencies to seek the prosecution of major violations and provide support and counseling when needed.

Social-awareness campaigns and interventions to empower women may also help prevent violence against vulnerable working women. Strategies could address the many complex factors that make women vulnerable to violence in informal-sector work spaces, including prevailing gender norms and power imbalances. Development actors might encourage policies and approaches to economically empower women, such as education promotion, skills development and training, and financial inclusion. A strategy that can be effective in reducing VAW in some settings includes enhancing women's economic power through microfinance loans, together with training that addresses gender role inequities (Fulu and Kerr-Wilson 2015). Such strategies may boost the economic capacity of women working in informal microenterprises.

IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES

Actions to improve public services can also reduce women's vulnerability to workplace violence. For example, public childcare for women with small children can reduce pressure on women who in many cases are forced to take on low-quality informal jobs that allow them to take their children with them or have flexible hours such as street vending. In addition, investments in urban infrastructure can create safer environments for women workers. More lighting in the streets, increasing tree coverage, and other improvements, such as transport infrastructure and public libraries (Cerdá et al. 2012) are interventions that reduce the crime and violence that affect the daily life of street vendors.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Informal workers engaging in collective action have difficulty with obtaining legal recognition of their work and their organizations. Informal workers tend to work in small numbers in scattered locations. Because they are usually poor, it is difficult for workers to pay regular membership fees, thus an organization's income may be barely sufficient to cover administrative expenses (Bonner and Spooner 2011).

Collective action and informal worker representation are vital, however, for advancing workers' rights and improvements in working conditions. Women informal workers can use multiple forms of organization. Unions serve to advance legislation and help members develop bargaining power. Cooperatives help women establish aid services (for example, childcare), while at the same time helping women to obtain bargaining power for salaries (Hensman 2001). These organizations can also help their members in the transition from the informal to the formal economy. In the case of street vendors, unions serve to advance legislation at the local level and to arrange their workspace to make it safer. For domestic workers, unions and associations help workers form a safety net to assist in cases of violence. For TCLF workers, collective action helps workers to bargain for fairer wages and hours, and better working conditions including safety.

Vulnerable women in informal work also need to understand and claim their rights. When women form labor collectives, they can acquire places to meet, discuss their problems, and seek solutions. However, women in the informal economy face many obstacles to organizing themselves and therefore require support. To advance the agenda of ensuring women informal workers' rights, interested interveners might promote and support trade unions and other organizations such as networks, alliances, NGOs, and self-help groups conceived to empower women and alleviate workplace problems specific to women. These organizations have the potential to make their members aware of their rights and legal options and to demand accountability and implementation by government officials, but the gender dimension should be at the center of their agenda.

ANNEX A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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