

"Zarina"

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## CHAPTER 5

# Gender Based Violence

## Articles 20-25



Participants during the March of the 16 days Campaign in Curepipe. Photo: Mary Jane Piang-Nee

### KEY POINTS

- Citizens gave their government a score of 64% for government's efforts to address GBV.
- The GBV Indicators research conducted in Mauritius suggests that at least one in four women have experienced GBV at some time in their life. Men have collaborated these findings, sometimes even more strongly than women report experiencing.
- Mauritius has passed a number of laws that address GBV, including in the workplace.
- The 2009 Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act prohibits all forms of trafficking for adults and children and prescribes penalties of up to 15 years' imprisonment for convicted offenders.

Table 5.1: CSC scores on gender based violence

	SGDI	CSC
Scores	N/A	64%
Ranks	N/A	4

There is no SADC Gender and Development Index SGDI score for GBV. Table 5.1 shows citizens' perceptions measured through the CSC. At 64% Mauritius ranks fourth in the region. The GBV indicators research suggests a high level of understanding on the subject; revealing

that three quarters of women in Mauritius knew about the Domestic Violence Act.

### Legal

Mauritius has passed a number of laws that address gender based violence including in the workplace.

- Protection from Domestic Violence Act
- Sex Discrimination Act
- Combating of trafficking in Persons Act of 2009
- Labour Act

## Extent of gender-based violence



The Protocol aim to reduce current levels of gender based violence by half by 2015.

**Table 5.2: No of reported cases registered at the Family Support Bureau 2011**

Nature of problem	Year 2011		
	Male	Female	Both sexes
<b>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE</b>			
Damage to property	6	21	27
Emotional abuse (by spouse)	1	23	24
Harassment by spouse	16	109	125
Illtreatment by spouse	6	44	50
Illtreatment by others	5	17	22
Physical assault by spouse/partner	58	609	667
Physical assault by others living under the same roof	13	97	110
Psychological abuse	8	23	31
Rape (marital)	0	0	0
Sexual abuse by spouse	0	2	2
Sexual harassment by spouse	0	3	3
Sodomy (marital)	0	3	3
Threatening assault by spouse	18	222	240
Threatening assault by others	8	51	59
Verbal assault by spouse (illtreatment, harassment, abuse, humiliation)	46	292	338
Verbal assault by others living under the same roof	5	39	44
Other	4	3	7
<b>Total no of types of domestic violence</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>1 558</b>	<b>1 752</b>

Table 5.2 refers to rape and not other forms of GBV.

Table 5.3 shows the number of domestic violence cases only. In 2011 1,752 cases were reported. Women reported 1558 (88%) of the cases compared to 12% men.

This buttresses what is widely known that women are affected by gender based violence disproportionately (even though this looks at domestic violence only).

The Family Support Bureau reported that between 2003 and 2011 seven women lost their lives while under an Interim Protection order.

There is a wide range of factors leading to domestic violence in Mauritius, such as economic pressures, alcohol abuse, extra marriage relationship and unwanted pregnancy.

### GBV indicators research

The gender based violence indicators research project embarked on by Gender Links in collaboration with the

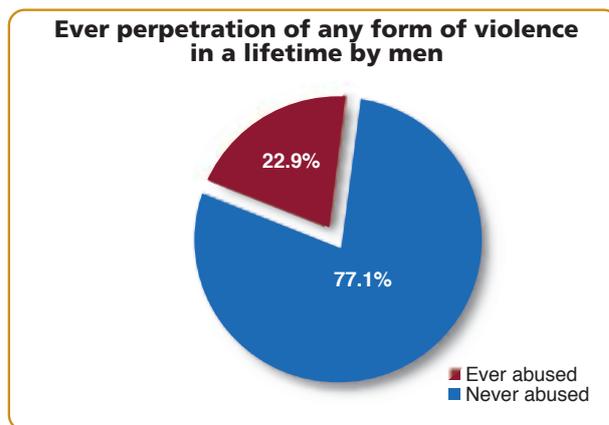
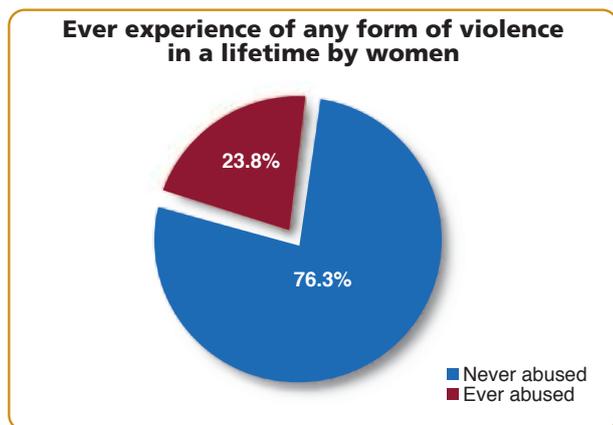
Mauritius Research Council aims to obtain comprehensive data on extent, response, support and prevention of gender based violence.

One of the key targets of the SADC Gender Protocol is to reduce by half current levels of gender based violence by 2015. Therefore it is important to benchmark in order to measure progress. Tools used include prevalence and attitudes household survey, analysis of administrative data gathered from the criminal justice system (police courts), health services and government-run shelters; qualitative research of men's experiences of intimate partner violence as well as first-hand accounts of women's and men's experiences, or "I" Stories; media monitoring and political context.

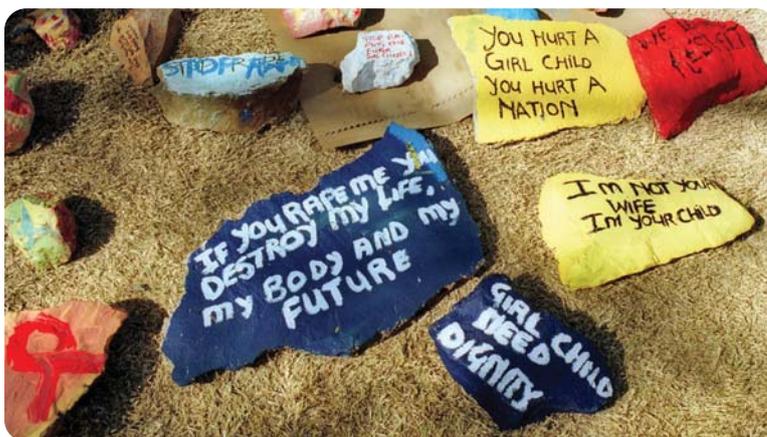
### Key findings

Two separate questionnaires were used in the survey to determine lifetime experiences of GBV by women aged 18 and above and perpetration of GBV by men of similar age was collected. Preliminary findings of the research to be officially released in October 2012 shows that:

**Figure 5.1: Any experience of GBV by women or perpetration of GBV by men**



- Figure 3.1 shows that 24 %, that is approximately one in four women, interviewed in the study reported experience of some form of GBV at least once in their lifetime while 23% of men reported ever perpetrating GBV in their lifetime
- However, men are more likely to admit to committing rape at 3.5% that women are to reporting experiencing rape, 0.7%.
- Emotional violence was the most commonly reported form of IPV. One in every six women (16%) experienced emotional IPV in their lifetime while 4% of women experienced emotional IPV in the 12 months before the survey.
- Educational attainment of women (the less educated the more likely to experience intimate partner violence); employment status in the last 12 months; experiences of abuse as a child for perpetrators; and alcohol abuse are key drivers of intimate partner violence.



## Response and support



The SADC Protocol provides that by 2015 state parties shall:

- Enact and enforce legislation prohibiting all forms of gender-based violence;
- Ensure that laws on gender based violence provide for the comprehensive testing, treatment and care of survivors of sexual assault;
- Review and reform their criminal laws and procedures applicable to cases of sexual offences and gender based violence;
- Enact and adopt specific legislative provisions to prevent human trafficking and provide holistic services to the victims, with the aim of re-integrating them into society;
- Enact legislative provisions, and adopt and implement policies, strategies and programmes which define and prohibit sexual harassment in all spheres;
- Provide deterrent sanctions for perpetrators of sexual harassment.

**Table 5.3: GBV response and support**

Provisions	What is in place	What needs to be put in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation prohibiting all forms of GBV.</li> </ul>	<p>The Protection from Domestic Violence Act (DVA) of 1997* was amended in 2004 and the last amendment was made in 2007. A National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence with five strategic objectives: improving legislation on DV and strengthening the justice system and other agencies; providing appropriate, accessible, timely, coordinated multi-agency responses and support to all victims and children; sensitising and changing attitudes to prevent domestic violence from happening in the first place; promoting responsible advocacy, sensitisation and provision of forum by media specialists to encourage the community to discuss domestic violence; undertaking research and studies on domestic violence.</p> <p>All Municipal and District Councils have a Gender Action Plan.</p> <p><b>*Legislation prohibiting all forms of GBV is not covered under the Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act</b></p>	<p>More shelters for survivors.</p> <p>In-depth research on measurement of GBV. The findings will help government and civil society to design and implement concrete action.</p> <p>Harmonised data collection on GBV.</p> <p>Gender action plans of localities to be implemented.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that all perpetrators of GBV are brought to book.</li> </ul>	<p>Harsher penalties for failing to comply with orders are provided for in the PDV (Amendment) Act 2007. On a first conviction a fine not exceeding Rs 25,000 and a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years is applicable, and on a second subsequent conviction a fine not exceeding Rs 50,000 and a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years is applicable.</p>	<p>Awareness and sensitisation campaigns focusing on men and boys.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive testing, treatment and care of survivors of sexual offences - emergency contraception.</li> </ul>	<p>This happens as soon as the case is reported to the police.</p>	<p>Awareness campaign on the relationship of HIV and AIDS and GBV.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) for survivors of GBV.</li> </ul>	<p>PEP is available to survivors of GBV.</p>	<p>Awareness campaigns on PEP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevention of sexually transmitted infections.</li> </ul>	<p>The Caravan of Health goes all over Mauritius to encourage the population to test, and they are then offered treatment.</p>	<p>Media campaign on the schedules of the Caravan of Health.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social and psychological rehabilitation of perpetrators of gender based violence.</li> </ul>	<p>In line with Government Programme 2005-2010, further amendments were brought to the PDVA in 2007 which include provisions for counselling instead of sentencing. The court would take into consideration factors such the nature of the offence and the character, antecedents, mental and psychological condition, age, health and home surroundings of the perpetrator. Failure to attend counselling leads to imposition of the original sentence.</p> <p>The Lotus Centre at the Prison and two NGOs, Kinouete and Elan, conduct training and awareness campaigns for the social rehabilitation of former prisoners, including perpetrators of GBV. They participate in empowerment and capacity-building workshops to start their own business or get a job.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of criminal laws and procedures on sexual offences and GBV to eliminate gender bias and ensure that justice and fairness are accorded to the survivor.</li> </ul>	<p>Laws have been reviewed to include harsher penalties.</p> <p>Parliament passed the Combatting of Trafficking in Persons Act on 21 April 2009. It prescribes punishment of up to 15 years imprisonment for convicted offenders, penalties which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other grave crimes.</p>	<p>Greater awareness of the laws.</p>
<b>Human trafficking</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific legislation to prevent human trafficking.</li> </ul>	<p>The Child Protection Act of 2005 prohibits all forms of child trafficking and prescribes punishment of 15 years. In November 2008 parliament passed the Judicial Provisions Act which provided for increased penalties for various offenses; the act prescribes punishment of child trafficking offenses of up to 30 years imprisonment.</p>	<p>Awareness of the Act.</p> <p>Baseline study on human trafficking. Rehabilitation of girls, boys and women who have been trafficked to do sex work, or to work as domestic workers overseas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanisms to eradicate national, regional and international networks.</li> </ul>	<p>Article 13 of the Act reads "(1) Any person who believes that a person is a victim of trafficking shall forthwith report the matter to the police (2) the identity of the person who makes a report under subsection (1) shall not be disclosed, unless a Judge in Chambers otherwise orders this".</p>	<p>Government, the police and civil society must work together to put in place mechanisms to eradicate trafficking.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harmonised data collection on trafficking.</li> </ul>	<p>The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare collects data and make them official through Press Conferences or in Parliament.</p>	<p>Harmonised collection of data. Baseline study on trafficking.</p>

Provisions	What is in place	What needs to be put in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building, awareness raising and sensitisation campaigns on trafficking.</li> </ul>	<p>The government demonstrated increased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts throughout 2008. Combatting trafficking in Persons Bill was drafted after consultation by the Attorney General with relevant ministries and government agencies, including the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Gender Equality and the Mauritius Police Force.</p> <p>The government made notable efforts to prevent the sex trafficking of children and reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. In 2008 the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications published and distributed to hotels and tour operators 3,000 pamphlets regarding the responsibility of the tourism sector to combat child sex trafficking.</p> <p>Law enforcement and child welfare officials conducted surveillance at bus stops, night clubs, gaming houses and other places frequented by children to identify and interact with students who are at a high risk of sex trafficking. The Police Family Protection Unit and the Minor's Brigade, in conjunction with the Child Development Unit of the MGECDWF conducted a widespread child abuse awareness campaign at schools and community centres that included a session on the dangers and consequences of engaging in prostitution.</p>	Aggressive campaigns on trafficking and sensitisation about the law.
<b>Sexual harassment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt laws, policies, programmes that define and prohibit sexual harassment.</li> </ul>	The Sex Discrimination Act contains provisions that define and prohibit any form of sexual harassment. The government has an anti-harassment policy. The Sex Discrimination Unit of the National Human Rights Commission compiled guidelines to ensure the prevention of sexual harassment of men/women in the workplace/institutions.	All localities of Mauritius to implement their gender policies. Awareness on the different forms of sexual harassment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender balance in bodies adjudicating sexual harassment cases.</li> </ul>	The Sex Discrimination Division is headed by a woman who deals with cases of sexual harassment in her office and sensitisation campaigns all over Mauritius.	Policies on sexual harassment in all workplaces and schools.
<b>Support services</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cases on GBV to be heard in a gender-sensitive environment.</li> </ul>	The NAP on domestic violence makes provision for the improvement of legislation and the strengthening of the justice system.	All members of the judiciary to receive training on the various forms of GBV.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special counselling services.</li> </ul>	The 2004 amendments from the PDVA were amended to extend protection to other members of the family living under the same roof with provision for counselling.	More counsellors at the MGECDWF.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated and sensitive services provided by police units; health; social welfare.</li> </ul>	<p>The six regional offices known as the Family Support Bureau provide psychological counselling and legal advice services to adult and children victims of GBV.</p> <p>In view of changing patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, the MWRCDWF has been implementing (since 2003), the Men as Partners Project, which is a gender-sensitive project aimed at promoting responsibility and participation of men in the family.</p> <p>Community based organisations have set up Zero Tolerance clubs. Members of these clubs act as watchdogs to ensure that their communities are violence free. Five Zero Tolerance clubs are operating in Mauritius. A project on anger management has been initiated as well.</p>	<p>To set up more Zero Tolerance Clubs.</p> <p>The MGECDWF to work in a sustained manner with NGOs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible information on services available to survivors of GBV.</li> </ul>	<p>The MGECDWF launched an anti-violence campaign. Sensitisation is also being conducted in collaboration with NGOs, CBOs and religious bodies.</p> <p>A hotline is available for cases of domestic violence. Hotline 119 provides family counselling services. The Police Family Protection Units also provide hotlines countrywide.</p>	<p>Making sure the hotline works on a 24-hour basis with proper online counselling services and advising survivors on where to go for help.</p> <p>More campaigns in the media, post offices, at bus stops, on buses and in all public places about GBV and hotlines. All materials to be developed in Creole.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible, affordable and specialised legal services including legal aid to survivors of GBV.</li> </ul>	The MGECDWF provides free legal services as, and when, required at court. Legal Aid for Women, a group of private lawyers, give legal advice for free to survivors of GBV.	Greater awareness about the legal and financial services available to survivors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialised facilities, including support mechanisms, for survivors of GBV.</li> </ul>	The MGECDWF and the police have signed a protocol of assistance to survivors. The survivor is taken to hospital instead of recording a full statement with only the gist of the offence. Only women police officers are allowed to take statements from female survivors. Survivors receive psychological assistance and appropriate prophylactic treatment for HIV and AIDS.	A one-stop shop needs to be established so that members of the public know what is in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehabilitation and reintegration facilities for survivors of GBV.</li> </ul>	The ministry provides temporary protection to survivors over a period of 15 days while other NGOs offer shelter facilities.	Campaigns must be conducted by the MWRCDWF so that survivors know about these support services.

Provisions	What is in place	What needs to be put in place
<b>Training of service providers</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender sensitisation training for all service providers engaged in the administration of justice, such as judicial officers, prosecutors, police, prison, welfare and health officials.</li> </ul>	The MGECDWF have conducted training programmes with officers of the Judiciary and members of the Council of Religions amongst others. The ministry also conducts programmes for local governments and other Ministries. The ministry has set up a Family Counselling Support Services Unit at the Central Prison. The Police Family Protection Unit gives training countrywide.	A monitoring and evaluation system is needed to assess the programmes' effectiveness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community sensitisation programmes for survivors of GBV.</li> </ul>	A National Domestic Violence Committee has been set up by the MGECDWF to promote and adopt a coordinated approach, and ensure the protection of survivors in collaboration with all parties concerned.	The NAP to be known by the general public.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal training programmes for service providers.</li> </ul>	The ministry gives formal training to service providers. The ministry provides outreach activities and service delivery to women, children and families as separate social groups and categories. It has dedicated units and programmes for each of these categories. There are also other ministries, NGOs, district councils and municipalities providing outreach activities and services delivery in various sectors.	Impact assessment of these trainings.

Source: *Trafficking in Persons Report (2009); papers from the MGECDWF on Measures to Combat Domestic Violence; The National Gender Policy Framework, 2008.*

## Human trafficking



The SADC Gender Protocol says that States Parties shall, by 2015:

- Enact and adopt specific legislative provisions to prevent human trafficking and
- Provide holistic services to survivors with the aim of re-integrating them into society;
- Put in place mechanisms by which all relevant law enforcement authorities and institutions may eradicate national, regional and international human trafficking networks;
- Put in place harmonised data collection mechanisms to improve data collection and reporting on the types and modes of trafficking to ensure effective programming and monitoring;
- Establish bilateral and multilateral agreements to run joint actions against human trafficking among origin, transit and destination countries; and
- Ensure capacity building, awareness raising and sensitisation campaigns on human trafficking are put in place for law enforcement officials.



Girls participating in a march during Sixteen days campaign 2011.

Photo: Mary Jane Piang-Nee

The 2009 Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act prohibits all forms of trafficking for adults and children and prescribes penalties of up to 15 years' imprisonment for convicted offenders.

The Child Protection Act of 2005 prohibits all forms of child trafficking and prescribes punishment of up to 15 years' imprisonment for convicted offenders; the Judicial Provisions Act of 2008 increased the maximum prescribed punishment for child trafficking offenses to 30 years' imprisonment. These penalties are commensurate with

those prescribed for other serious crimes. From arrest to sentencing of offenders, cases of child trafficking typically takes 18 to 24 months to resolve.

However, the government has not designated an official coordinating body to improve anti-trafficking communication and coordination among the relevant ministries, law enforcement entities, working groups, and NGOs. It needs to increase protective services available to victims of child commercial sexual exploitation, particularly providing shelter and educational opportunities.

The United States of America Department of State's Trafficking in Persons indicates that Mauritius remained in Tier 1, a status that commends the government of Mauritius for complying fully with the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking. However, on the 25th of May 2011, the Minister for Gender Equality released a document indicating that there were 1,518 cases of sexual exploitation of children from 2006 to March 2011. This means a 50% increase compared to the period 2000 to 2005. The government is currently working on the Consolidated Children's Bill, which will be introduced shortly in parliament.

The government makes notable efforts to prevent the sex trafficking of children and reduce the demand for commercial sex acts during the year. In 2008, the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure, and External Communications published and distributed to hotels and tour operators 3,000 pamphlets regarding the responsibility of the tourism sector to combat child sex trafficking. Law enforcement and child welfare officials conducted surveillance at bus stops, night clubs, gaming houses, and other places frequented by children to identify and interact with students who were at a high risk of sex trafficking.

The Ministry of Gender Equality operates a 24-hour hotline for reporting cases of sexual abuse. Mauritius has a formal protocol on the provision of assistance to all victims of sexual abuse. A child welfare officer accompanies children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation to hospital and works with police to obtain a statement. Medical treatment and psychological support are available at public clinics and in NGOs in Mauritius.

The Police Family Protection Unit and the Minor's Brigade, in conjunction with the Child Development Unit, conducted a child abuse awareness campaign at schools and community centres. The campaign included a session on the dangers and consequences of engaging in prostitution; this campaign reached over 12,035 persons in 2008, including 145 parents, 300 primary school teachers, and 35 youth leaders. In addition, the police provided specific training on avoiding child prostitution to over 100 children in Flic en Flac, a tourist destination on the west coast of the island.

In October 2009, the government used the Children Protection Act to convict and sentence a woman to ten years' imprisonment for subjecting two Mauritian girls to prostitution in 2007. Also during the year, the Mauritius Police Force's Minors Brigade, which carries out all investigations involving trafficked children, completed the investigation into a 2007 case of a grandmother who allegedly forced her granddaughter into prostitution and referred it to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) for action. In 2009, the DPP referred for trial the January 2008 case of a man and woman charged with inducing their 12-year-old niece into prostitution.

Mauritius has sustained its efforts to identify, investigate, and prosecute incidences of trafficking. The Mauritius police force increased training programmes on trafficking for police officers and continued its awareness campaign in schools and villages. The government's efforts to coordinate interventions among all relevant ministries needs to be strengthened in order to provided

consistent provision of protective and investigative services to trafficking victims.

Overall this model of intervention can be replicated for similar policy implementation processes and reviews within the countries of the SADC.

## Prevention



*The Protocol provides for measures, including legislation to discourage traditional and cultural practices that exacerbate GBV and to mount public campaigns against these.*

The Constitution protects the rights of all citizens of Mauritius and there are no harmful traditional practices in the country.

### **Political will and political champions key to prevention**

An analysis of 266 available speeches obtained through Hansards, Library of the Legislative Assembly, websites of political parties and the media demonstrates that politicians do not refer to GBV in most of their speeches. This forms part of the GBV Indicators Project findings.

**Figure 5.2: Reference to GBV in political speeches**

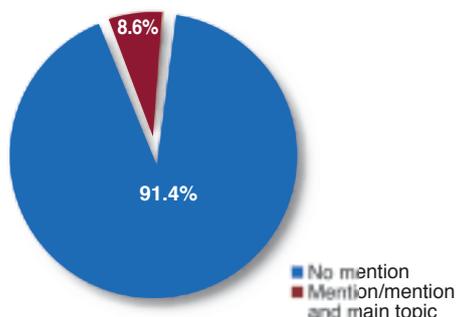
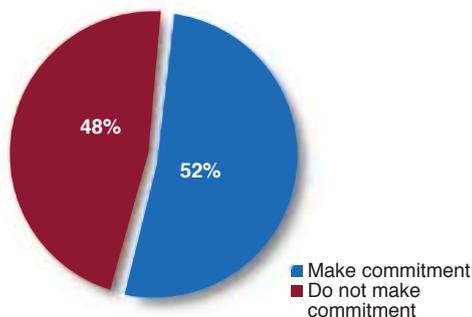


Figure 5.2 shows that only 9% that is 23 of all speeches analysed referred to GBV. Of these speeches however most of them made a mere passing reference to GBV without addressing the issue in depth or holistically. Seventy eight per cent of speeches merely mentioned

**Figure 5.3: Reference to commitment to end GBV**



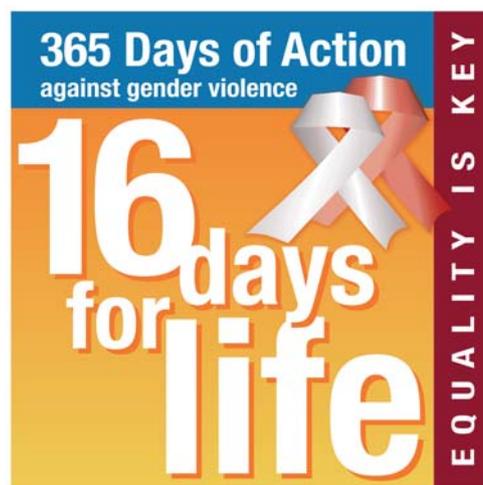
<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly. 2006b. Rights of the Child: Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. New York: UN.

GBV while 22% of speeches had GBV as a main topic. Figure 5.3 shows that in 52% of the speeches, politicians said they were committed to ending GBV. A greater proportion of women than men referred to commitment. Fifty-three percent of women and 50% of men said they were committed to ending GBV. This shows that more women politicians in Mauritius are engaging in GBV discourse and refer to commitments than men. This finding is useful in lobbying for women's representation in politics with the hope that they will put women's issues on the political agenda.

The political parties' manifestos highlight projects specific to women but do not mention gender equality. Although media coverage of GBV is balanced, some media still write in a sensational manner with headlines that are degrading to women. It is important that leaders champion the campaign for ending gender-based violence as they wield power to influence behavior change particularly of boys and young men.<sup>1</sup>

### **Public awareness campaigns**

Each year the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign has provided a rallying point for the governments, NGOs, CBOs and other stakeholders in the region to mount events aimed at raising awareness, influencing behaviour change and securing high level political commitment to end GBV. The campaign takes place annually in the period between 25 November and 10 December.



### **Awareness of GBV campaigns**

The prevalence/attitude survey which is part of the GBV indicators project asked women and men about their knowledge and participation in GBV campaigns.

**Figure 5.4: Knowledge of events or campaigns to end GBV by women and men**

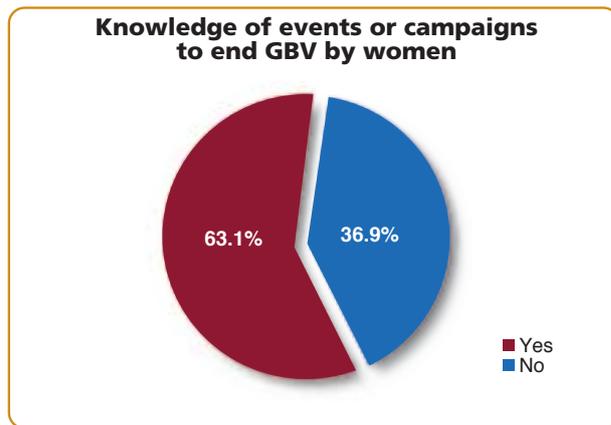
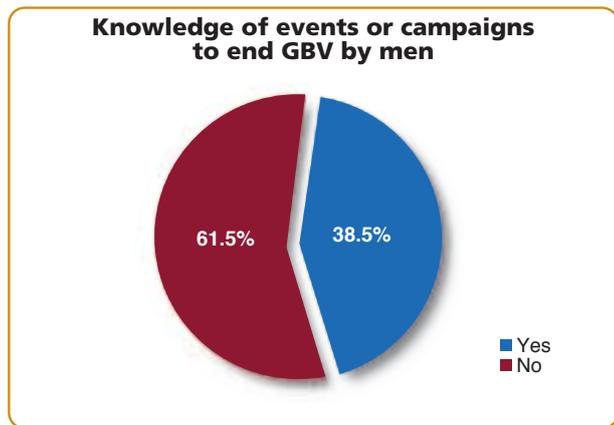


Figure 5.4 shows that there is little knowledge of GBV campaigns by men and women in Mauritius. Almost similar proportions of women and men were aware of the campaigns. Thirty-seven percent of women and 39% of men said they had heard about GBV campaigns or events.

**Source of information of events or GBV awareness campaigns**

Participants who had heard about the campaigns were asked about their source of information.

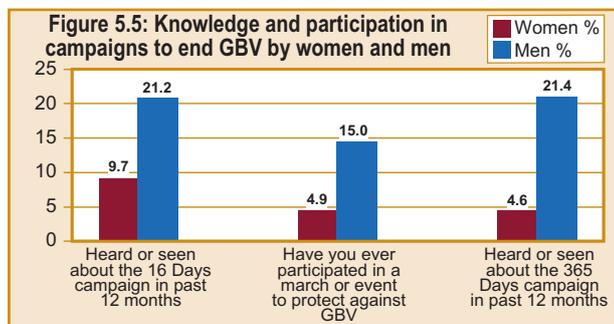


Figure 5.5 shows that more men than women were aware of GBV campaigns or events. Twenty-one percent of men and 10% of women had heard about the 16 days campaign. Twenty-one percent of men and 5% of women had heard about the 365-Day campaign. A small proportion of the participants had participated in GBV campaign events. Fifteen percent of men and 5% of women had participated in a march or event to protest against GBV.

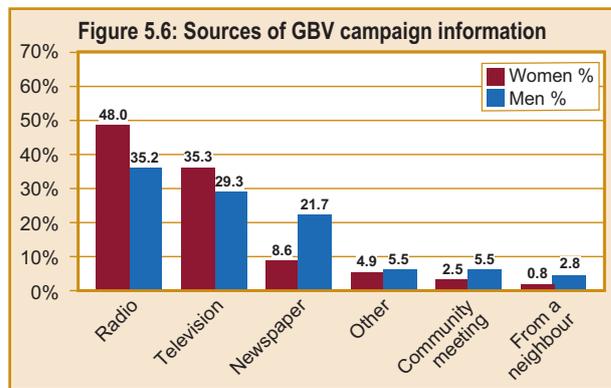


Figure 5.6 shows that the majority of women and men access knowledge about GBV campaigns through radio. Almost half (48%) of women and 35% of men interviewed said they had heard about GBV campaigns through the radio. A greater proportion of men than women heard about the campaigns through newspaper. Twenty percent of men and nine percent of women had heard about the campaigns from the newspapers. Smaller proportions of women and men had heard about the campaigns in community meetings or from neighbours or friends.

**Integrated approaches**



*The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development calls on states to adopt integrated approaches, including institutional cross sector structures, with the aim of reducing current levels of gender based violence by 2015.*

Mauritius adopted an integrated approach to addressing gender based violence. After the successful implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence for 2008-11, Mauritius has developed and costed a new action plan the National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence (NAPEGBV) 2012-15 that takes into consideration GBV forms other than domestic violence. Mauritius is commended for costing the NAPEGBV because the process will give guidance to implementers and allow for identification of resource gaps. The fact that the NAPEGBV is well costed is an achievement that will aid in determining how best to allocate limited resources. Another achievement to be noted is the setting up of institutional mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the NAPEGBV in the form of the NPEGBV and the CAC.

### National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence 2012-2015 (NAPEGBV)

The Ministry of Gender Equality held a two-day stakeholders consultative workshop on the costed NAPEGBV. The workshop focused on the development of multi-agency responses by stakeholders with a view to:

- Enabling them to integrate and mainstream actions against gender based violence (GBV) in their respective existing programmes for sustainability.
- Ensuring that a coordinated multi-sectoral approach is adopted and implemented by them. Networking and partnership building in the fight against GBV will promote synergy, avoid duplication and contribute towards a shared vision of strategies adopted.
- Increasing accountability of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Action Plan. Stakeholders should report on actions taken at their end as per the agreed-upon TOR. The challenges faced, opportunities seized, progress achieved, when shared, will contribute to re-engineer actions to be taken by members of the National Platform.

### Objectives of the NAPEGBV

The output of the consultative workshop was the NAPEGBV document. The NAPEGBV are aimed to:

- implement a multi-level approach to redress GBV by reviewing, adopting and enforcing protective laws and policies; improving health, legal/justice, security, education and social welfare systems to monitor and respond to GBV survivors and perpetrators, and ensuring prompt and compassionate services to survivors.
- implement a coordinated multi-sectoral approach in tackling GBV issues in the country.
- mobilize communities and specific target groups (men and boys) to change social norms likely to perpetuate GBV.



Municipal council of Beau-Bassin Rose-Hill Sixteen Days Campaign.

Photo: Gender Links

### Levels of Action<sup>2</sup>

The interventions planned in the NAPEGBV are at three levels namely:

*Structural level (primary protection):* preventive measures to ensure rights are recognized and protected (through laws and policies).

*Systemic level (secondary protection):* systems and strategies to monitor when those rights are breached (legal or justice systems, health care systems, social welfare systems and community mechanisms).

*Operative level (tertiary protection):* direct services to meet the needs of those who have been abused.

### National Platform to End GBV (NPEGBV)

The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare launched the NPEGBV on 19th October 2011. The NPEGBV comprises both government and civil society actors. The multi-sectoral NPEGBV will allow for an increased accountability at all levels and ensure an efficient, effective and coordinated effort leading to the elimination of GBV in Mauritius. The following table shows the government and civil society actors on the NPEGBV:

### Objectives

The NPEGBV's objectives include:

- bringing together and consolidate the efforts of all stakeholders involved in reducing GBV in a holistic, systematic, complementary manner through multi-sectoral, and multi-dimensional approach
- providing appropriate care and services to empower survivors and rehabilitate perpetrators

In her launch speech of the NAPEGBV, the Minister said:

"A reporting mechanism on the actions of stakeholders will be established so as to enable the promotion and sharing of best practices, as well as the reengineering, whenever necessary, of actions taken by members of this Platform."

<sup>2</sup> NAPEGBV, 2011, pg 9.

### Co-ordinating Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CAC is a core team that will finalise the country strategies to fight GBV. This team is led by the Head of the Family Welfare and Protection Unit and comprises representatives of the following institutions:

- State Law Office;
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources;
- Ministry of Health and Quality of Life;
- Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment;
- National Empowerment Foundation (NEF);
- Police Force;
- MACOSS;
- SOS Femmes;
- Media Watch Organisation; and Gender Links
- Indian Ocean Centre for Education in Human Value

The CAC will meet every three months and the NPEGBV will meet twice a year. Technical committees will be set up for each pillar as and when required, to provide technical advice for the implementation of the Action Plan.

### Area Domestic Violence Committees

Following the setting up of the NDVC in 2009, Area Domestic Violence Committees (ADVCs) became operational through the six FSBx.

### Objective of Area Domestic Violence Committees:

The main objectives of the ADVC are to:

- Reduce and prevent the incidence of domestic violence.
- Provide accessible, reliable, timely and coordinated guidance on cases of domestic violence and ensure victims receive appropriate treatment and care.
- Create an environment free from any forms of violence for the family and the community.

### Challenges

Very often perpetrators fail to attend counselling services at the FSBx. To address this challenge, Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy (VEARP) is being elaborated through the services of a consultant. The VEARP focuses on the empowerment of both perpetrators and survivors of domestic violence through training, advocacy policies and workplace initiatives. Working with perpetrators increases the safety of, and reduces the risks to their partners and children.

### Objectives of VEARP

The VEARP is expected to:

- Promote and make available VEARP services to stakeholders engaged in the fight against domestic violence to assist both abusers and victims;
- Set up guidelines to assist both the public and the private sector in the establishment of workplace initiatives to fight domestic violence; and
- Provide the minimum standard required in the provision of VEARP services by all stakeholders.

### Costing

The Ministry of Gender Equality (then Ministry of Women's Rights) allocated a sum of Rs 84,845,000 (about US\$3,142,407) on the item of family welfare and protection from domestic violence.

Through the Protection of Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act and formulation of a Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy, a programme has been developed for the protection of victims and rehabilitation of perpetrators of domestic violence reinforced. A sum of Rs 70,000,000 (about US\$2,592,592) was budgeted for under the item Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress.

In a press statement in 2010, Honourable Sheila Bappoo, former Minister for Gender Equality stated that GBV cost the country almost Rs 1.4 billion yearly, (about US\$ 51,8 million).



Overall, both state and non-state actors in Mauritius have taken major steps towards ending gender violence.

- Gender violence prevention needs to be stepped up through communication for social change and awareness campaigns
- Advocacy around the key findings of the GBV indicators research project.
- Devising strong monitoring and evaluation processes learning from the GBV indicators pilot project.
- Working with men as partners is integral to GBV prevention strategies by all stakeholders including government, civil society and men's groups.



Police supporting the 16 Days Campaign against gender violence, Mauritius, December 2011.  
Photo: Mary Jane Piang-Nee