

# Two in five women have experienced physical, sexual and emotional violence by partner: UNFPA

BY HUZefa ALIASGER

Two in five (or 39.8%) women have experienced physical, sexual and emotional violence by a partner in their lifetime according to the Sri Lanka National Survey on Violence against Women conducted in 2019 by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS).

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON PAGE 2 >>>

# Two in five women have experienced physical, sexual and emotional violence by partner: UNFPA

● Around 60% of women who have experienced partner physical violence have had children witness or overhear the violence, leaving an early traumatic experience their children have to face

The Survey was supervised in 25 districts and conducted on all women above 15 years of age, with a focus on intimate partner violence.

The UNFPA survey reveals close to half (49.3%) of women who have experienced sexual violence by their partner did not seek formal help anywhere, while 52.3% of women stated the main reason for not leaving home was they did not want to leave their children.

Interviews conducted by UNFPA with several women also disclose that one in five (or 21.4%) women did not reveal being sexually exploited before being interviewed due to the shame they felt within themselves to disclose violence. Additionally, almost half (47.5%) of the women interviewed agreed that "a man should be the boss" whilst 46.5% agreed that "a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees". Over a third of women also agreed that men have a good reason to hit their wives.

The report made by UNFPA states a quarter of women reported severe psychological impacts due to violence and have reported symptoms of depression. Statistics in the report further revealed that 35.7% of women had thoughts of attempting suicide. Mostly around 60% of women who have experienced partner physical violence have had children witness or overhear the violence, leaving an early traumatic experience their children have to face.

The report highlights statements made by women like "I didn't think I'd survive. After all that I had been through, and what he was doing to me, I didn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. I didn't think there was any light left at all" and "Please relieve us from this hell we are living in".