

## Addressing the Root Causes of Violence against Women in Bangladesh: A Call for Reform

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The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh enshrines the principles of freedom, justice, and equality, affirming that all individuals are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection under it. Furthermore, the Constitution upholds the principle of non-discrimination, with a specific commitment to ensuring gender equality. Thus, the country's core objective is to establish a society free from exploitation, where the rule of law, fundamental human rights, and political, economic, and social equity are guaranteed for all citizens. Despite the constitutional commitment and the existence of numerous laws aimed at combating discrimination and violence against women, incidents of such violence in Bangladesh continue to rise at an alarming rate. Ain o Salish Kendra's (ASK) most recent data reveals alarming statistics about the prevalence of violence against women in Bangladesh. Between January and September 2023, 158 women were murdered as a result of violence. According to the non-governmental organization Light House, a staggering 9,764 women fell victim to violence over a one-year period. This figure includes 4,360 cases of rape and 450 murders following rape. In total, 17,027 incidents of violence against women were reported during this period. These figures not only underscore the urgent need for stronger enforcement of existing laws but also highlight the deeply entrenched societal issues contributing to the patterns of violence. This piece aims to highlight that, in addition to legal shortcomings, there are several other critical factors that contribute to the persistence of violence against women, a grave violation of human rights which need to be addressed.