

# The Family Support Helpline: Report a Gender Based Violence in Five Provinces of Afghanistan

2019



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## List of Acronyms

**6464-** The Family Support Helpline

**ACDEO-** Afghanistan Capacity Development and Educational Organisation

**BAAG-** British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group

**CSO-** Central Statistics Organisation in Afghanistan

**EVAW-** Elimination of Violence Against Women

**GBV-** Gender Based Violence

**USIP-** United States Institute of Peace

**WHO-** World Health Organisation



## Executive Summary

This study aims to examine the root causes of violence in Afghanistan and their link with mental health issues by analysing the Family Support Helpline (6464) data calls which have been recorded from January 2016 to March 2019. At this first stage calls from five provinces of the county were reviewed: Balkh, Bamiyan, Panjshir, Kabul and Herat. A total of 7,496 recorded calls during this period have been recognised as gender-based cases, from 80% female and 20% male callers. The callers were from different age groups and nearly a quarter of these were children under 15 years old.

To meet the aim of the study three research questions were posed: 1) *what are the main types of GBV at the provincial level in Afghanistan?* 2) *what are the root causes of the violence and the risk factors at provincial level in Afghanistan?* and 3) *what are the consequences of violent behaviour for victims in terms of mental health?*

To obtain answers to the research questions the data from calls was analysed using qualitative and quantitative techniques. Related research literature was also reviewed to provide a picture of the situation for people living in the targeted provinces. To examine the root causes of violence this study adopted the WHO framework<sup>1</sup> for defining the risk factors of violence. According to the nature of cases and the various reasons for making calls to the Helpline, the typology of Interpersonal Violence of the framework was found a useful tool to codify the main reasons for violence among the residents. The findings from the study show that seven out of ten callers, women and children, had experienced moderate or severe types of physical violence. Refusing to wear a Burqa was one reason for physical violence alongside forced marriage and a woman's desire to continue in education and work. One third of callers had suffered from sexual violence in the form of forced marriage and sexual abuse. It was found that men, as well as women, were victims of forced engagement and forced marriage. About 20% of sufferers of sexual violence in Kabul and Balkh had been abused by male members of their families, a father, brother or uncle.

The study uncovered different types of psychological or emotional gender-based violence in the provinces. Out of the total of sufferers (1,490), 40% had suffered because of polygamy, 30% had experienced enforced isolation, 10% had been abused because they had not borne a child or a son, 6% asked for their share of inheritance and 4% were insulted because of their gender. 15 factors in causing GBV among families were identified in the targeted provinces. Forced marriage, engagement in childhood and restrictions on education were consistent causes of violence in all five provinces.

*Each province was found to have individual risk factors for gender-based violence; gambling and high bride price in Balkh, family financial problems in Bamiyan, drug addiction and traditional marriage in Herat, extra marital affairs and enforced isolation in Kabul, and a high bride price and running away from home in Panjshir province.*

The study found that a third of all callers had suffered from violence during the entire duration of their lives and that 10% of them were living with life long injuries caused by physical violence. It was also found that women and girls had reacted to violence in three main ways: a quarter were seeking divorce, some of them had sought support from the police and a

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<sup>1</sup> (WHO, 2002)

third of Panjshir women had run away from their parental home to escape a forced marriage.

This report is divided into four sections. First the methodology of the study is explained. Secondly, a definition of gender-based violence and groups the types of violence using the WHO Typology of Interpersonal Violence model is provided. The third section presents the root causes of violent behaviour and its risk factors. The final, fourth, part contains conclusions and recommendations.

## Methodology

Information from call data recorded in a database by the Family Support Helpline, 6464, during a three-year period (March 2016 to January 2019) was analysed. During these three years more than 14,300 callers had contacted the helpline from five provinces, Balkh, Bamiyan, Kabul, Panjshir and Herat. The collected data included demographic information on the callers; gender, age, occupation, location and marital status. The quantitative data were cleaned and coded in three stages:

1. Calls were first sorted according to the reasons for calls and about 6,400 calls unrelated to the subject of the study, that of gender-based violence, were removed from the dataset.
2. The wide range of reasons for calls in the helpline internal recording system were then grouped into the four key types of violence (physical, sexual, psychological and neglect) based on the WHO typology for Interpersonal violence<sup>2</sup>. Calls recorded as domestic violence were used for measuring physical violence. Calls categorised as sexual abuse, sexual violence, Baad, Baddal, forced marriage, underage marriage were selected for measuring sexual violence. The calls relating to mental health, self-harm and suicide were used to examine the psychological violence. The calls about access to education, work and engagement issues were used to examine the issue of neglect experienced by callers. The calls made for multiples reasons were sorted according to the severity of the issue.
3. Using Stata software, a logic test<sup>3</sup> was applied to clean the data and ensure accuracy of the data. A pre-set pattern searched for any inconsistency amongst the demographic information from the recorded calls. Other patterns were created for cross-checking the types of violence in each case to make sure they are recorded correctly. As a result of these tests 350 of the call data were eliminated from the dataset. Of the total of removed data calls Kabul had 38%, Herat 32%, Balkh 11%, Bamiyan 5% and Panjshir 4% of such data.

A total of 7,496 ( 53% of the total ) calls were linked to GBV cases for 80% female callers and 20% male callers. 20% of the callers were younger than 15 years old, 30% of them were

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<sup>2</sup> Please see the Appendix 1 for the WHO typology.

<sup>3</sup> Logic test is logic check of two variables by using logical counsellors such as AND, Or and other functions through Stata software to identify and eliminate the data recordings' errors and duplicates.

16-20 years old, 28% were between 21-35 years old and 22% were older than 36 years. In terms of geographic location about 60% of the callers had made contact from rural areas of the provinces and 30% from urban.

The quantitative data were analysed by using cross tabulation, correlation tests and the presenting descriptive statistics.

The qualitative information was gathered from the “comments” section of the recorded cases in the Helpline database. NVivo12 Software was used to categorise and code the calls. They were recorded in the language of Dari by the counsellors and translated to the English language once they have been coded. To identify the risk factors for violence at the micro level the cases were categorised and coded into five Sections and each Section was sub divided into four Nodes and each of the Nodes (eg. Physical Violence) were coded to Sub-Nodes (eg. Divorce). For statistical analysis, the coded cases were imported into the Stata software and descriptions of the cases given as examples in the report.

To ensure the accuracy of the data, in addition to using the Logic-Test, unclear cases were crosschecked with the Helpline counsellors to obtain further explanation and clarification. Desk research was also conducted to cross-check the social-economic situation of people during the last three years. The information was summarised and compared with the findings of this report in relation to the risk factors for the violence<sup>4</sup>.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained during the process and, in accordance with ethical research, the voice record of the calls had remained confidential to ACDEO and was not shared with the researcher for analysis. To ensure the anonymity of the callers, their personal information; such as name, last name and parents’ name, if it was applicable, or any other identifying factors were not collected.

## Findings: Types of Gender-Based Violence

### Definition of Gender-Based Violence

The World Health Organisation (WHO) provides an analytical framework for violence prevention, which identifies the risk factors and causes of violence. The researcher has used the framework in this study.

Gender-based violence is defined as:

*“[A] phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls<sup>5</sup>.”*

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to Annex I

<sup>5</sup> (Equality, 2014)



The WHO Typology of Interpersonal Violence describes four main categories of violence and abuse: physical, sexual, psychological, and that of deprivation or neglect. The victim and/or perpetrator can be a partner, child, or elderly member of a family<sup>6</sup>

Callers to the Family Support Helpline are women, men, and children who are seeking advice for a wide range of reasons. The typology of Interpersonal Violence model has been helpful in breaking down the types of violence which have been recorded during the last three years. The reasons for calls to the Helpline are therefore categorised into four sections: physical, sexual, psychological and deprivation or neglect.

### Physical violence

Physical violence was reported by callers from all five targeted provinces. It was the highest frequency reason for calls in Herat, Bamiyan and Balkh and the second highest in Kabul and Panjshir provinces (*please see table 1*). Women and children, including boys and girls, were the main victims of violence and the key perpetrators of the violence were husband, father, brother, step son, father in-law, mother in-law and, in Kabul cases, sister in-laws had played a role as well.

Province	Physical Violence	Total Number of Calls by Province
Herat	75%	1,000
Bamiyan	73%	270
Balkh	55%	2,480
Kabul	45%	3,600
Panjshir	25%	120

**Table (1)**

Sufferers from physical violence were subject to multiple acts of violence such as punching, kicking, slapping, hair pulling, threatening with a knife or gun, torturing by an object, being locked in a room, poisoning and burns. Balkh and Kabul callers experienced more severe physical violence (87.4% and 31% respectively). The violence occurred more often among married women who had been married for a minimum of one month to a maximum of 10 years.

*“My husband is always having fun with his friends. I argued with him saying he does not care about my children and me. He pushed me into the water well. My children saved me, but it hurt my waist and I can’t walk anymore. Now he wants to re-marry, saying you are useless.”*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 35, Urban)*

In the majority of cases, severe bodily harm and injuries were coupled with mental trauma, which the women described as unbearable.

*“My husband is a gambler. He sold all of my golden jewellery and my household goods. I have been married for 10 years and I have always been*

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to Annex 1

*abused by my husband. Whenever he loses the game, he beats me. You can see the scars all over my body. He says you are a woman, you are nothing, and your family sold you to me so you are my servant. He says go to wherever you want to go, here is Afghanistan and you can do nothing!"*

*(Balkh, Woman, Age 33, Rural)*

Various events were noted that triggered violence in the families such as exchange marriage or Baddal <sup>7</sup>, living in a shared house, a desire to work outside the home by women, disobeying husbands and in-laws, having contact with the parental family or how they dressed in public. Following are the example of the cases of physical violence:

*"I had an exchange marriage. I like my husband and we are happy together, but my sister in-law and brother did not like each other. My sister-in-law does not obey my brother. Every day she creates a new problem and my brother beats her. Now she is back to her parents and asking for separation. My husband said if your brother accepts the divorce, we must separate from each other too. I am very worried about what is going to happen to my life and my children."*

*(Balkh, Woman, Age 30, Rural)*

*"I have just gone to a party at my father's house, but my husband does not want me anymore. He beat me then sent me back to my parents. He says to my father to give him back all the marriage expenses because he wants to take another wife...I don't want this life... I want to kill myself."*

*(Herat, Woman, Age 21, Urban)*

For many Afghan housewives attending a family party is the only social activity they can enjoy. Preventing them from participating in such social activity can cause more tension and conflict in a household and in addition the isolation can cause serious mental health issues. An unwillingness to allow a wife to work outside the home or continue her education had been found to be one of the reasons for physical violence. It mostly occurs among married women at an average age of 25 years old and living in urban areas of the provinces.

*"I am a third-year student in faculty of Journalism. I was a university student when I got married and my in-laws agreed to allow me to complete my education after the marriage. Now my husband does not allow me to complete my education, he beats me and told me if you don't listen to me, I will beat your daughter as well..."*

*(Mazar-e-Sharif, Woman, Age 21, Urban)*

Or in another case a young man says:

*"I like my wife to be educated but my father doesn't allow her to go to school. Last time he beat my wife with a piece of wood which broke her*

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<sup>7</sup> Baddal or marriage based on exchange is a traditional practice of marriage. It usually happens when two families agree to exchange the female members of their family in favour of reducing marriage costs or strengthening the families' ties.

*nose. He told me next time if I saw your wife going out, I will never forgive you. I don't know whom I should listen to, my wife or my father..."*

*(Mazar-e-Sharif, Man, Age 29, Urban)*

About 80 instances of physical violence (40% Kabul and 7% Herat) were linked to the women's covering, such as Burqa or Hijab.

*"I was very sick. I asked my husband to take me to the hospital. He said he would not unless I wear the Burqa. I did not listen to him and I visited the doctor with my mother. When I came back he beat me to death, and I lost my four months unborn baby."*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 25, Urban)*

Frequently reported cases show that violence and abuse did not end even with police intervention. 60% of sufferers of severe types of physical violence in Kabul asked for police help but, when the perpetrator was released, the violence often got worse.

*"My husband beat me and even bites me when he is aggressive. I have more than 72 signs of biting on my body. Once I asked for help from the police and they took him into custody for only a week. He got released by paying a bribe and he has started violating me again. He is always arguing with me saying you are not a good wife; you can't cook well, you do not prepare my food on time. Last time when we argued, he put me on the fire. I did not call the police this time, because it does not help."*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 35, Urban)*

In all the cases of violence the husband was the key perpetrator. In 60% of cases the mother and sister in law also played a role.

Conflict within the household forces many women to ask for a divorce. Although divorce is not culturally acceptable, around 1430 women who had suffered from physical violence (37% from Balkh and 23% from Bamiyan) chose divorce as their last option. According to the findings, they had already been in an abusive relationship with their husbands for several years.

*"My husband has never treated me well. He beats me regularly and I returned to my father, but every time my father forced me to go back to my husband. My husband says stay with my mum otherwise you will be beaten every day. I came back to my father again. I cannot bear it anymore, I want to get divorced..."*

*(Bamiyan, Woman, Age 40, Urban)*

Some women preferred to stay in an abusive relationship for a variety of reasons, such as losing child custody, financial dependency, lack of knowledge about how to file a divorce case, a lack of support from the parental family, cultural barriers and corruption in the justice system.

### *Children*

520 children under the age of 15 contacted the Family Support Helpline about physical violence cases 45% from Herat, 30% from Balkh and 25% from Bamiyan province. The perpetrators of violence were known to be parents, step parents, an uncle as a guardian and in some

cases an older brother. The young girls had come to this violence because they resisted a forced marriage.

*“My step-mother forces me to marry a married old man who is one of her relatives. He is a very rich man, but I don’t like him. He is cruel with his other wives. I told them that I don’t want to marry I am too young, but my step-mother says we can’t keep you any longer, marry and go.”*

*(Balkh, Girl, Age 13, Rural)*

The boys were forced into labour to make a financial contribution to the family instead of going to school, especially when the father was a drug addict. Young boys were made to leave school to endure harsh physical labour in the agricultural fields. According to the recorded data, 30%<sup>8</sup> of the recorded cases were from poor families who lived mostly in rural areas of the provinces.

*“Last year, when I was in class 8, my father did not allow me to go to school. Instead, he forced me to work on our land. I kept reading my books and could pass the 8 class exams this year. When my father realized that I am going to go to school, he beat me until I could not scream any more. Still, I want to go to school. Please tell me how I can convince my father to not stop me from getting education?”*

*(Bamiyan, Boy, Age 16, Rural)*

The sufferers said that they always felt sad, depressed, anxious, disappointed and worthless.

## Sexual violence

Sexual violence encompasses a range of acts, including child and forced marriage, sexual exploitation and external marital affairs. The following table illustrates the percentage of sexual violence cases recorded in the provinces.

Province	Sexual Violence	Total Number of Calls by Province
Panjshir	40%	120
Kabul	25%	3,600
Balkh	23%	2,480
Bamiyan	10%	270
Herat	6%	1,000

**Table (2)**

Not only women but men have also suffered from sexual abuse. This was practiced in the form of forced marriage, like exchange marriage, forced marriage of a widow, forced marriage to settle a family dispute (Baad) and engagement in childhood.

*“We had newly got married when my husband was killed in an explosion. I wanted to go back to my father, but my father-in-law did not allow me. He*

<sup>8</sup> The base is total number of boys younger than 15 years old from all five targeted provinces.

*is forcing me to marry my husband's brother who is just 16 years old. I am also eight months pregnant with my husband's baby. I don't want this marriage, please help me!"*

*(Bamiyan, Woman, Age 35, Rural)*

## Women

One of the forms of sexual violence among married women was sexual abuse by the husband. In some cases, in the absence of a husband, father and brother in-laws abuse women. 9% of sexually exploited women from Balkh and Kabul provinces had a disability and had been abused by their husband. In one instance a disabled woman said to the counsellors that her husband forced her to have sexual relations with strangers for money. The woman had no children and on one occasion she was forced to have an abortion in the early months of her pregnancy. In several such cases women with disabilities were put under enforced isolation. They were kept away from their family and their town and had no connection with either their family members or friends.

The cases show that young unmarried women were also at risk of sexual abuse. Callers reported that the key perpetrators of sexual abuse were fathers, brothers and uncles. In some case they had suffered lifelong abuse.

*"I don't have a mother I wish my father had died as well, I hate him. He used to sexually abuse my sister after my mother died. Now he is trying to abuse my little sister. He tells her if you listen to me, I buy toys for you. I asked for help from my aunt. She said you should not talk about it with anybody. It is your responsibility to keep your father's reputation. I do not know what to do?"*

*(Balkh, Woman, Age 20, Rural)*

According to the information provided by the callers, these incidents mostly happened in large families living in rural areas of the province. The incidents had mostly happened in childhood leaving the sufferers with mental trauma. They only talked about their experiences when they were forced to accept a marriage proposal.

*"My brother sexually harassed me many times when I was a child. I realised that he wants to do the same with my three-years-old niece as well. I did not allow him and informed my mother and my sister, but my mother did not believe me and argued with me. She also engaged me with a man against my wishes. I am frightened if my fiancé knows about my problem, what should I tell him?"*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 20, Rural)*

A third common act of sexual violence, mostly reported by those from Kabul, was husbands having affairs outside marriage. 25%<sup>9</sup> of women from Kabul said that the world had ended for them when they learned that their husbands were planning to marry another woman, or had already done so.

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<sup>9</sup> The base total is number of sexual abuse cases from Kabul province only.

*“We married three months ago. We did not want each other but we were forced by our parents to accept it. Now I understand that my husband has a relationship with another girl. They have been in a relationship since we had been engaged and I did not know. I am sure he will take her as his second wife one day. I don’t want this life. I want to kill myself!”*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 23, Rural)*

About 60 Kabul female callers, out of 2900, admitted that they were in a relationship with another man. The confession mostly came from those who had another suitor before their marriage but had been forced to marry their husbands. About 30% of them said they were not happy with their marriage or, were not treated well by their husbands or in-laws. 20% of them said they felt guilty for having an affair but, emotionally, they found it difficult to stop it.

*“I was in love with another boy but my parents forced me to marry my husband. I never liked him and I did not want this marriage. I am still in a relationship with that boy. In the first days of my marriage, I wanted to break up with him but he threatened me saying he would show my pictures to my husband’s family and they will kill me.”*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 25, Urban)*

To escape from a forced marriage, about three-quarters of young girls from Panjshir province had revealed their intention to run away from their parental home because they were in a secret relationship with someone else. They had been forced by their parents to marry against their wishes, or their father had asked a very high bride price which the boys were unable to pay. In several other cases, young girls were scared for their lives if the parents got to know about their secret relationship.

*“I am in love with our neighbour’s son. He loves me as well and no one knows about it except my sister. I am always terrified my father and brothers. If they know about our relationship, they will kill both of us. He says, let’s run away and go to Kabul.”*

*(Panjshir, Woman, Age 20, Rural)*

In some other incidents, those who ran away and married their male suitors had suffered from isolation and severe violence by their in-law’s families for many years.

*“I ran away ten years ago and married my husband. My in-laws were always cruel to me. Since I ran away, I could never go back to my village to visit my family. They have never forgiven me. I heard that my father said that he would kill me and my husband anytime he could. My in-laws have become more aggressive towards me.”*

*(Panjshir, Woman, Age 35, Rural)*

Almost all of those callers mentioned that they feared getting in touch with their parental families or returning to them even though they faced violence in their married lives.

### *Men*

About 330 young boys frequently called the Helpline to ask for advice when they were forced to marry against their will. The highest number of calls from men were received from

Herat (43%), followed by Balkh (33%), Kabul (12%), Panjshir (6%) and Bamiyan (4%). The callers were mostly students at school or university and averaged 17 years old.

*"I was engaged to marry my cousin in childhood by my grandparents. Now neither my cousin nor I want to continue this commitment. We said to our family that we want to make our own decisions about marriage. But my father does not allow me to break it up because it was his parents' wish. He says your fiancé is your property, you must take her, and you won't be my son if you could not keep my honour. ... I am sure we would not have a happy life... I don't know what to do."*

*(Herat, Man, Age 35, Rural)*

### Children

749 children, both boys and girls, contacted the Family Support Helpline to seek legal and psychological advice about forced marriage alone and it was the most frequent reason for girls to call, from all five provinces. In these cases, girls were being forced to marry by their parents as a strategy to get some cash, from the bride price, for paying a gambling dept, building a house, establishing a business, covering a medical expense or the cost of another marriage.

*"My parents force me to marry the son of the head of our village. I don't like him, everybody says he is a gambler and a drug user. My father wants to exchange me with 1000,000 Afghani, twice which of my cousin, as if he is in a competition with my uncle, he doesn't think about it, if I marry him he does not allow me to go to school..."*

*(Balkh, Girl, Age 13, Rural)*

In all cases, young girls found it impossible to stand up against a forced marriage decision and attempts of suicide were noted.

### Psychological Violence

All victims of violence suffer psychologically, but some cases were particularly severe. Of the total of calls (7,496) from five targeted provinces, about 20% of the callers had suffered from emotional abuse (*please see table 3*).

Province	Psychological Violence	Total Number of Calls by Province
Panjshir	35%	120
Kabul	30%	3,600
Balkh	14%	2,480
Herat	12%	1,000
Bamiyan	8%	270

**Table. (3)**

The violence was attributed to one or more of the following issues: the wife had not borne a child or a son, the husband wanted to take another wife, women were requesting her share



of an inheritance, and women wanted to continue education or work outside home. Psychological violence occurred in the form of threats, enforced isolation, verbal insults, humiliation and delay in the marriage of engaged girls. The following cases are particularly severe examples of gender-based violence.

*"I was forced to marry my cousin while I was a school student four years ago. I did not want to marry but my parents forced me. I could not bear a child for three years. My husband and mother-in-law were always emotionally abusing me for not being able to bring a child to the family. After two years God gave me a daughter. Their violent behaviour reduced a little but there is no end to it. My husband is not happy now because the baby is not a boy. He is saying he wants to re-marry to have a son. I want to kill myself if it happened..."*

*(Herat, Woman, Age 24, Rural)*

More than 400 female callers from Kabul province mostly from rural areas, contacted the advice line regarding inheritance issues.

*"I have six children and my husband's income is not enough for us. I wanted to take my inheritance, but my uncle says you cannot receive your share. It is a sin for a woman to receive any inheritance. Please tell me, is it true?"*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 38, Rural)*

Several cases recorded where women had been either misinformed about their rights or were psychologically violated by male members of their family in order to prevent them receiving their inheritance.

*"My father left me some a part of his land but my brothers do not want to give it to me. They say if you take it then we are not sisters and brothers anymore."*

*(Kabul, Woman, Age 26, Rural)*

Another act of psychological violence was banning women from continuing their education or taking a job outside home. Of 260<sup>10</sup> women who were seeking employment, 55% of them had attained higher education and 45% of them had completed schooling and wished to work in the area of their proficiency.

*"I graduated from a medical science faculty and wanted to work in our village hospital but my husband does not allow me. He says, no need for you to work, I will find a job. A good wife stays at home and takes care of her children."*

*(Panjshir, Woman, Age 26, Urban)*

*"Since my childhood, it was my dream to be a policewoman. When I completed school, I registered my name with the national police force without telling to my parents. I passed the test successfully, as soon as my father found out about it, he fought with me and blamed my mother. He says our*

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<sup>10</sup> All targeted provinces.



*neighbour will talk behind his back and say that I cannot control my daughter. He said, you are not allowed to put your feet out of the door and if you do so then do not come back home."*

*(Panjshir, Woman, Age 21, Rural)*

Regarding the emotional abuse, young women from Bamiyan and Herat provinces expressed their disappointment about the way male members of their families have treated them as women.

*"My brother always humiliates my sisters and me when we want to participate in family discussions. He says girls know nothing they should not interfere in the family decisions. When I try to have some say, he mocks me in the presence of everyone and makes me embarrassed. My father also supports him and does not stop him..."*

*(Bamiyan, Woman, Age 18, Urban)*

According to the recorded cases, the phrases which have frequently been used to exclude women from taking part in family discussions and decisions were like "you have no brain", "you go to the kitchen", "shut up", "who asked you" etc. In some cases, verbal abuse was even combined with a physically violent act.

Some signs of mental illness such as depression, sadness, nervousness, and emotional confusion were mentioned by the callers. In a significant number of cases, victims said they were contemplating self-harm or suicide.

### *Men*

2% of male callers from Kabul and 1% from Bamiyan province said that their wives were verbally aggressive towards them because they could not make enough money. They felt that their expectations were unreasonably high.

*"Every time I returned home from work, my wife asked me how much I had earned. If I did not earn enough, she started complaining and driving me mad, then I beat her to make her silent."*

*(Kabul, Man, Age 35, Urban)*

### *Children*

There is no doubt that living with conflict and the violent behaviour of parents has a negative impact on the social and mental status of children. About 225 underage callers from all targeted provinces expressed their frustration and sadness about the ongoing conflict in their household. In some cases, children felt themselves to be guilty in this situation. For example, a 9-year girl says:

*"My father always fights with my mother because we do not have a brother. Then my mother is crying and screaming. We don't have dinner that night and we can't sleep because my mother is crying all the night...I wish I was a boy..."*

*(Herat, Girl, Age 9, Urban)*

Denial of these fundamental rights causes serious mental health issues, especially among children<sup>11</sup>

## Neglect

According to the data from the last three years, callers from Bamiyan (9%) and Herat (7%) have been neglected by their fiancés or parents in different ways. Of the total 42% had been left by their husbands when they took another wife, 33% were left alone when the husbands travelled abroad, and 23% had been neglected by their fiancés following their engagement.

*“I was engaged to my cousin six years ago. He left the country and never came back. People say he has re-married and has another wife there, and his family refuse to declare our engagement as void. I am locked in this situation. I don’t know what to do?”*

*(Herat, Women, Age 28, Rural)*

*“My husband has married another woman and does not care about me and my children’s needs. I wish he was a good father to his children at least.”*

*(Bamiyan, Women, Age 35, Urban)*

Increased participation of women in the workforce seems to have created a new issue for working women to deal with. Although the increase is minimal its effects on Afghan families’ expectations and roles are becoming apparent. In some cases from Bamiyan province, women have been neglected by their husbands since they had made an income contribution at home. The female callers complained that their husbands do not take any responsibility for the family income or the home and children and no longer paid any attention to their wives. They have found themselves to be single-handedly responsible for everything; household chores, children and supporting the family financially.

*“My husband and I work as police officers. We had borrowed money from bank and built a house for ourselves. It is more than three years that we both have been working to pay the loan. Recently, he does not help me with the loan anymore. He says you have proved that you can take care of everything by yourself, then do it. I’m left alone by myself to pay the bank’s loan and take care of all the family’s responsibilities. He does not care about me anymore...”*

*(Bamiyan, Women, Age 40, Urban)*

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<sup>11</sup> (Funk, 2018)

## Causes of and Risk Factors for Violence

Findings from the qualitative and quantitative analysis show that there is no single factor to explain why violence is happening although types of violence do share the same risk factors<sup>12</sup>. For example, living in a shared house increases the risk of physical, sexual and psychological violence. The key risk factors which increase the possibility of violence and abuse are explained in the following section. The degree of influence of each risk factor in all provinces are shown in Table (4).

### Forced marriage

Overall, the study says that the critical risk factor for violence in all the target provinces was forced marriage. This type of marriage was practiced in various ways such as engagement in childhood, child marriage, exchange marriage (Baddal), Baad and marriage of a widow.

#### *Engagement in Childhood*

According to the cases recorded more than 300 callers (80% girls and 20% boys) became engaged during childhood. The findings suggest that the young callers were aware of their right not to accept a forced marriage, especially if they had not reached the legal age for marriage, but they felt powerless to convince their parents to give them a free choice in decisions about their future life.

#### *Exchange Marriage (Baddal)*

Baddal was one of the common risk factors for physical and sexual violence and was mostly reported by women from Balkh province. Baddal is customarily practiced to avoid marriage costs or to strengthen family ties or friendship<sup>13</sup>, but in practice, it causes more conflict and tensions among couples and families. The findings show that at least one out of four callers were subjected to exchange marriage in Balkh province. The women had faced cruelty by their husbands and in-laws not through their own fault, but because the other exchanged woman was in trouble with her family. Among the Baddal couples, usually one or two of the following issues caused the conflict within the families; not bringing the same amount of dowry as the exchanged woman, not bringing similar gifts, had not borne a child or a son and being unable to do the household chores properly. In many cases the young bride was forced to leave education or work because her exchanged sister-in-law was not interested to continue hers.

At least one in four in callers were subjected to exchange marriage in Balkh province, suffered from in-law's violence.

#### *Marriage of a widow*

About 145 widowed women in Bamiyan, Balkh and Herat had been forced to remarry a male member of their husband's family (50%, 30% and 20% respectively). In some cases, they had been forced into a marriage with a man at least 7 years younger. A man who is forced to

<sup>12</sup> Risk factors are those that are shown to increase the possibility of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence, according to WHO World Report on Violence and Health.

<sup>13</sup> (UNICEF, 2018)

marry the widow of his brother is more likely to re-marry<sup>14</sup>. 8% of the male callers in Bamiyan who were seeking advice on re-marrying revealed that they were forced to marry their brother's widow in their previous marriage. Polygamy causes more conflict and abuse within a family when the wives are not treated equally by the husband. Overall, 30% of women and their children from all provinces suffered neglect by the husband who had taken another wife.

### *Marriage registration*

The study shows that an unregistered marriage increases the likelihood of violence for married women. One third of women callers who had experienced a traditional marriage in Herat province were struggling to ask for her Nafaqa (husband's financial support) or seek divorce as they had been abandoned by their husbands.

### *Bride Price*

In more than 450 cases of sexual violence (81% Balkh and 19% Panjshir), the bride price had caused violence among families. Paying a gambling debt or covering the financial needs of the family were the most common reasons that motivated parents to ask for a higher bride price. The amount of bride price, mentioned by callers, ranged from \$6000 to \$12000 and often a higher amount was asked to keep up with the 'competition'. Not only was the bride price high but the purchase of gold and the hiring of a good wedding hall had also become competitive in Balkh province<sup>15</sup>.

It was also evident that the bride price was one of the factors that encouraged parents to withdraw a girl from school and force her into an early marriage. This finding is in line with the Early Marriage in Afghanistan research report and UNICEF's survey report (2018). The report states that the high cost of weddings and the bride price forces many young boys to travel abroad to earn money to fund their marriage. It also found that nearly half of the young boys with an average age of 11 to 12 had already become engaged or married<sup>16,17</sup>.

Taking a higher bride price turned to a competition among parents in Balkh.

### *Financial constraints on families*

Poverty is also a risk factor for child marriage. This study found that poverty is associated with child marriage and school attendance, both of which can cause physical violence within families. Other studies have shown that poverty is a risk factor for child marriage<sup>18</sup>. In low-

<sup>14</sup> (Smith, 2009)

<sup>15</sup> The Helpline Counsellor

<sup>16</sup> (WCLRF, 2008)

<sup>17</sup> (Synovitz & Jalalzai, 2019)

<sup>18</sup> (Ashely, 2011)

income families, the money which parents receive when their daughter marries, encourages them, especially the fathers as the breadwinners, to force their daughters into a marriage<sup>19</sup>. 120 male callers, from Herat and Bamiyan, younger than 15 years old were forced to labour and some of them had suffered from severe physical violence. Generally, in Afghan families, the economy is highly dependent on the income of male members of the family. Fathers are usually responsible for providing for the financial needs of the family and sons are obliged to assist their fathers. This defined gender norm puts the male members of a family under more pressure when the family is large, and its members are mostly female. The high ratio of dependency on working people (96.3 Bamiyan<sup>20</sup>, 85.5 Herat<sup>21</sup>) puts young boys at greater risk of violence. The severe drought has created further problems as the local economy, especially in rural areas, is considerably dependent on agriculture and forestry. The provincial agricultural assessment of Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IFPC) by ministry of Agriculture, has classified Bamiyan and Herat provinces as Phase 3 in terms of food security, meaning that these provinces are in a critical environmental and agricultural situation<sup>22</sup>.

### Extra marital affairs

Having a relationship outside of marriage was a risk factor for sexual violence among Kabul callers. Although having a relationship outside of marriage is legally, religiously and socially unacceptable, more than 856 Kabul callers, including men and women, revealed that they were having an affair outside of marriage. Extra marital affairs were linked to forced marriage among both men and women, 80% of callers who had had an affair were victims of a forced marriage.

According to the counsellors, a lack of knowledge about marital relationships, early pregnancy and in-laws' interference had caused the couples to live separate lives. Usually the couples who disagreed on family issues grew apart and looked for happiness and enjoyment by having an affair. Affairs may lead to polygamy among men, divorce, child abuse and a risk of honour killing for women<sup>23</sup>.

Raihan has found from her research that having an extra marital relationship is becoming a new widespread social phenomenon among the young generation in big cities like Kabul. In the primary study it was found that financial problems and an outdated style of marriage forced the young generation to practice a new life style to avoid the heavy burden of forced marriage<sup>24</sup>. This issue requires further study to understand the critical reasons behind the growth of this social phenomenon.

80% of those who had had an affair out of marriage were victims of a forced marriage.

### Acts of controlling behaviour

Enforced isolation, restrictions on education and on working outside the home are grouped under umbrella of acts of control. Overall, almost 30% of women suffered from enforced

<sup>19</sup> The Helpline Counsellor

<sup>20</sup> (CSO, 2014)

<sup>21</sup> (CSO, 2018)

<sup>22</sup> (FAO, 2019)

<sup>23</sup> The Helpline Counsellor

<sup>24</sup> (Raihan, 2019)

isolation causing physical violence, 40% of them had their education restricted and 35% were prevented from working outside. This in turn caused psychological violence and mental health issues for sufferers.

The common practice in this isolation was the prevention of women seeing their parental families. In some cases, shifting women to other cities, after marriage, increased the risk of sexual abuse and isolation. This situation further aggravated the threat to women's mental health and the likelihood of depression<sup>25</sup>. The victims felt more isolated and alone when both the husband and mother-in-law perpetrated the violence. In nearly a quarter of those who suffered from social isolation the mother-in-law had played a role. Living in a shared house creates complicated relationships as well as expectations of a newly wedded bride<sup>26</sup>. A bride, especially when she is too young to fit herself in the new household, is still very much connected to her parents<sup>27</sup>.

Not surprisingly, several male callers said that they were not happy when their wives attend parties or have a phone conversation with their relatives. It is predictable that the high cost of marriage can cause a friction between the two families and the couples which consequently can affect women's status in their married lives<sup>28</sup>.

The key reasons for denying the right to education among young girls were forced marriage, insecurity, and a long distance between home and school. This finding is in line with the findings from the Barriers to Education report which found social norms and life-threatening issues for girls on the way to school are reasons for parents taking their daughters out of school<sup>29</sup>. The correlation test also showed<sup>30</sup> that those who live in rural areas were more likely to suffer from the denial of their right to education. Findings from this CSO survey showed that the number of student drop outs from school after the secondary level<sup>31</sup> has been increasing alarmingly. However, another survey found that support for gender equality in education has been increasing improving among people, and remained steady during the last four years<sup>32</sup>.

Child marriage, insecurity and long distance of home and school are still the main barriers to children's education

Nonetheless the findings from the analysis of the three years of the helpline suggest that child marriage and a long distance between home and school are still the main barriers to children's education.

A negative perception about women's presence in society was the main reason that women were prevented from working outside the home. A total of 80 callers (58% Panjshir, 30% Kabul and 12% Bamiyan) were denied their legal right to do so. Even a poor economic situation

<sup>25</sup> The Helpline Counsellor

<sup>26</sup> (Gereš, et al., 2018)

<sup>27</sup> The Helpline Counsellor

<sup>28</sup> The Helpline Counsellor

<sup>29</sup> (Dryden-Peterson, 2009)

<sup>30</sup>  $r=0.4$ ,  $p<0.0$

<sup>31</sup> (CSO, 2018)

<sup>32</sup> (Akseer & Rieger, 2018)

did not motivate some families to allow women to take a job outside the home. Young women in Panjshir province were banned from seeking employment outside the home despite the dire economic situation of their family. The CSO survey reports confirms that employment rate, especially among women, is significantly low across the country<sup>33</sup>. Interestingly, the call data shows that some of working women have been neglected by their partner after taking a job outside home. Bamiyan's working women reported feeling that they had not received enough support from their husbands while working outside the home although their income contribution was helping the family's finances. After the fall of the Taliban regime, Afghan women were quick to use the opportunity to join the workforce. Joining the labour market is a quite new experience for some Afghan women and their families. In addition to the challenges they faced in entering the market, this research found that neglect was a new issue that working women now experience in Afghanistan.

### Infertility

Infertility and the inability to give birth to a son, perceived to be the fault of the wife, have been recognised as leading causes for psychological violence against married women, particularly among Herat callers. Afghanistan has ranked tenth among the 20 countries with the highest mortality rate<sup>34</sup> and Herat is one of the provinces with a high infant mortality rate (71 per 1,000 life birth) as access to health care centres is limited in the province, especially in rural areas<sup>35</sup>. The findings show that the women who experienced psychological violence also suffered from a range of mental health issues including depression, anxiety and self-harm. About 450 callers with this condition had attempted suicide at least once during their married life.

### Inheritance

The law entitles a woman to inheritance<sup>36</sup>. However, the study shows that some women in Kabul and Balkh do not receive their rightful inheritance due to a lack of knowledge about their rights or the failure of families to respect these rights. In some situations, not only, women but their family members as well have no knowledge of women's inheritance rights<sup>37</sup>. Inability to access inheritance can impact a woman's life and her economic independence. Researchers into domestic violence consistently emphasise that women's economic independence can positively affect the situation of women and their children<sup>38</sup>. However, the data suggests that in the absence of economic independence a woman will feel she has to remain with her abuser and suffer from lifelong violence to protect herself and her children.

Not only women but their family members as well have no knowledge of women's inheritance rights.

<sup>33</sup> (CSO, 2018)

<sup>34</sup> (Plecher, 2019)

<sup>35</sup> (CSO, 2018)

<sup>36</sup> (MoJ, 2009)

<sup>37</sup> The Helpline Counsellor

<sup>38</sup> (Nordien, et al., 2003)

### Drug Addiction

There was a close association between drug abuse and domestic violence. Nearly 260 callers (50% Herat, 40% Kabul and 10% Balkh) said they had been violated by a drug addicted partner. Women and children were also at high risk of abuse by an addicted father. In several cases children, young boys, had been forced to drop out of school and labour to provide for their family financially when the father failed to do so.

According to a UN report, Afghanistan is one of the largest producers of opium in the world<sup>39</sup> and number of drug users is estimated to be between 1.3 to 1.6 million<sup>40</sup>. This will make it more likely that violence will remain present among residents if drug problems continue.

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<sup>39</sup> (Nasralla & King, 2017)

<sup>40</sup> (Engel Rasmussen, 2017)



Table (4): Risk Factors for Gender-Based Violence

	Forced Marriage	Enforced Isolation	Polygamy	Bride Price	Infertility	Shared House	Restriction on Work	Drug Addiction	Rights of Inheritance	Burqa	Gambling	Affairs out of Marriage
Balkh	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	69-40%	Less than 30%	69-40%	69-40%	69-40%	Less than 30%	Over 70%	No case
Bamiyan	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	Less than 30%	69-40%	Over 70%	69-40%	Less than 30%	69-40%	No case	No case	No case
Kabul	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	Less than 30%	Over 70%	69-40%	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	No case	Over 70%
Panjshir	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	69-40%	69-40%	Less than 30%	Over 70%	Less than 30%	Less than 30%	No case	Less than 30%	No case
Herat	Over 70%	Over 70%	Over 70%	Less than 30%	Over 70%	69-40%	Less than 30%	Over 70%	Less than 30%	69-40%	Less than 30%	No case

## Legend

- Over 70%
- 69-40%
- Less than 30%
- No case

## Attempts to fight against violence

The findings suggest that sufferers from violence have taken one of the following three ways to fight back against it; seeking for divorce, calling the police and running away from abusive parents. On average women who are engaged to be married suffered for more than five years, married women for more than six years during their married life and unmarried young women could suffer life-long abuse.

### *Divorce*

More than 1,850 ( 45% Balkh, 23% Herat, 22% Kabul, 3% Bamiyan and Panjshir) callers had the intention to seek a divorce. Physical violence, sexual abuse, polygamy, drug addiction of the husband and travel of husband abroad were the main reasons to seek divorce.

Some of the sufferers of violence said that divorce is not an option for them because of losing their children's custody, economic dependency, social stigma and not being supported by parental families. Several had suffered from mental illness and depression and were at great risk of suicidal thoughts.

### *Call to Police*

16% of physical violence sufferers from Kabul had contacted the police for help but, for nearly half of them, the abuse did not end despite having reported it to the police. Data shows that the perpetrators of the crime escaped prosecution by paying a bribe or having a good connection. Corruption in the justice system let them freely continue their abusive behaviour and the inadequate legal system is therefore also partly responsible for the high prevalence and severity of violence committed against women.

### *Running Away from Home*

The study shows that there was a strong correlation between forced marriage and the intention of running away from home in Panjshir province<sup>41</sup>. Almost a quarter of the female callers had mentioned that they intended to run away or had already done so. Others were thinking of running away because of a forced marriage, a high bride price, being in a secret relationship with a boy and having a promise of marriage by their male suitor. A large number of callers mentioned that they were frightened of their parents objecting if they found out about their relationship. Unfortunately, what happened if they did was as horrific as it would have been had they stayed in the abusive relationship. Those who ran away from home and married their partners were still subjected to violence by their in-laws in their married life. The USIP and Human Rights Watch research findings also highlight forced marriage, poverty and fear of honour killing as the key risk factors for running away from home<sup>42</sup>. Running away from home was therefore not a solution to escape violence but it could be a new factor for causing further violence.

## Life-long violence

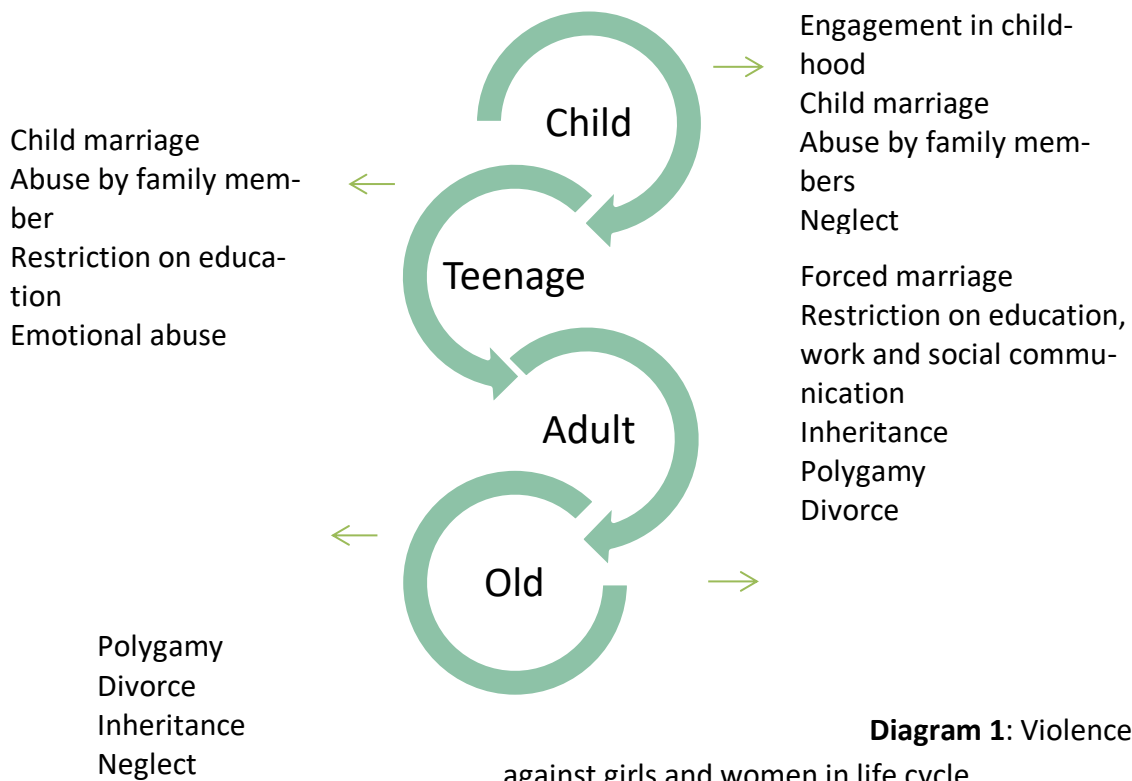
Approximately, two thirds of women callers had suffered from life-long violence and they had experienced more than one type of violence in their life time. The following diagram

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<sup>41</sup>  $r=0.5$ ,  $p<.000$

<sup>42</sup> (Watch, 2013)

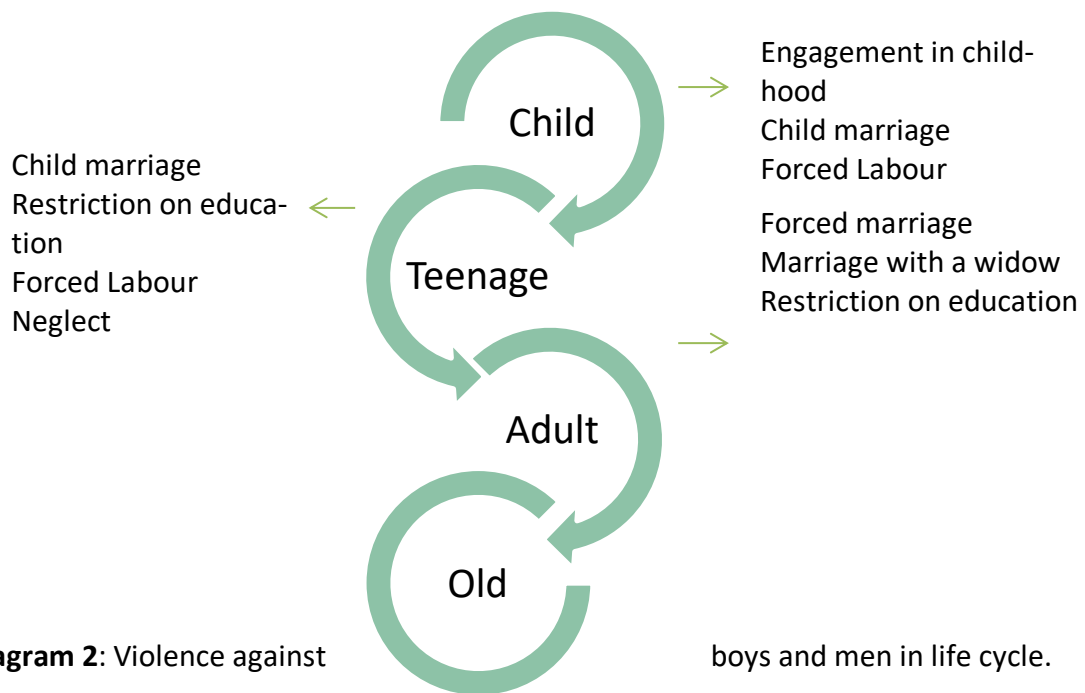
shows the types of violence and abuse a girl and woman might experience in the four stages of a life cycle.



**Diagram 1:** Violence against girls and women in life cycle.

One in four men who contacted the helpline had suffered from at least one form of gender-based violence during their life time. The following diagram shows the risks of violence against men<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> No case of experiencing violence was recorded among elderly men.



## Conclusions

The study found compelling evidence of the gender-based violence suffered by people in Afghanistan; mainly by women and girls but also men and boys and concluded that these are major problems in these five provinces and therefore throughout Afghanistan. Given that the evidence came from those with knowledge of the Helpline and telephone access to it the unreported incidence is likely to be far greater.

Some risk factors for gender-based violence are shared by all five provinces; such as forced marriage, polygamy and restriction on education as well as province specific ones (please see Table 4). The consequences of violence for people are unhappiness, mental illness and attempting suicide.

This report emphasises the need for a range of public awareness raising campaigns to foster attitudinal change to early and forced marriage and in respect for humans' rights.

It also suggests a need for further research on some issue such as sexual violence by male member of a family or experience of psychological violence among married men.

Three research questions were asked in order to examine the root causes of GBV in the five targeted provinces. *The first question asked what are the main types of gender-based-violence in the provinces.* In response to this research question, the study found that the vast majority of the callers, including women and children, have been suffering from physical violence. Kabul and Balkh residents had experienced the most severe types of physical violence such as poison or torture with an object, and those in the other three provinces had experienced moderate forms of violence. There was a link between the experience of physical violence and women seeking divorce. The likelihood of divorce increased with the length of a violent marriage. In the majority of cases, the partner was the key perpetrator of the violence, but it was also meted out by in-laws and parents.

Sexual violence was the second most common type of violence which appeared in the form of forced marriage, child marriage and sexual abuse. Forced marriage and engagement in childhood had victimised both women and men in all targeted provinces and were associated with polygamy and divorce. One in five sufferers of sexual abuse in Kabul and Balkh had been abused by a close male member of their family. Sexual assaults by father and brother or other close male member of a family has a social stigma and therefore people do not report it to the police or talk about it. These issues require broader and deeper research to examine the reasons for it and the likelihood of it occurring.

Emotional and verbal gender-based psychological violence had occurred when a woman had not borne a child or a son, and asked for their share of their inheritance or when the husband had wanted to marry another woman. Women in Bamiyan felt that they were mistreated by male members of their family as women and excluded from family discussions which they found insulting.

Married women whose husbands had re-married and those who were engaged to be married were at risk of deprivation too. Problems had occurred when the partners had travelled to neighbouring countries to look for work and left behind their fiancés after becoming engaged.

Male callers had experienced sexual violence in the form of forced marriage. Young boys in Bamiyan and Herat had suffered from forced labour which dropped them out of school and a few men callers from Kabul and Bamiyan had said they were suffering from psychological abuse by their partners because they are unable to make enough money.

In relation to the second research question; *what are the risk factors and the root causes of violence in the provinces?* 15 immediate risk factors were identified which increased the likelihood of GBV within families. As the table (4) illustrates the risk factors for violence were common to all provinces but some factors were known to be particularly specific to a province. For example, forced marriage and engagement in childhood and restriction on education were consistent reasons for violence in all provinces but Baddal, bride price and the habit of gambling have been recognised as the key risk factors or root causes of violence among Balkh residents. Among Bamiyan residents, living in a shared house, the financial constraints of a family, gender-biased social norms and the long distance between the school and home were known as the main risk factors for violence. Drug addiction, traditional marriage and enforced isolation were known as the risk factors for violence among Herat residents. In Kabul cases, having affairs, in-law's interference in couples' issues, control over women's dress, and the denial of the rights to work, to education and to inheritance were known to be the root causes of violence. Last but not least, the high bride price caused running away from home and controlling behaviour (e.g. restriction on education and employment) were the main factors for violence in Panjshir province.

*The third research question was: what are the consequences of violent behaviour on the mental health of victims.* A close link was found between experiencing violence and developing the symptoms of mental illness. Sufferers from physical violence had more feelings of anger, hurt, nervousness and fear.

Sufferers from sexual violence reported having mental health problems like depression and anxiety. Interestingly, whilst other provinces reported that some victims of forced marriage had tried to commit suicide, in Panjshir they cited running away from home as a means of escaping abuse. It should be noted that the incidents of running away from home were followed by far worse consequences such as abuse by strangers or being victims of honour killing.

Those who had experienced psychological violence and negligence repeatedly mentioned that they had no interest in carrying out their daily routines, to be in a social gathering and that they felt powerless. Attempts at and the intention to commit suicide along with cases of self-immolation were more frequently recorded among sufferers of psychological and sexual violence than the two other groups. This finding is in line with other research findings which have shown that the impact of psychological violence on victims is not less than that caused by physical violence. In some cases, it can cause even more serious health issues in a victim than does the physical violence.

## Recommendations

### In programming:

#### *Public Awareness: Raise knowledge, understanding and awareness of people about:*

- all forms of gender-based-violence among residents and inform them about available legal resources to encourage reporting a violent act;
- the negative impacts of the traditional practices of engagement in childhood, child and forced marriage for both boys and girls;
- harmful consequences of the practice of Baddal or exchange marriage and paying a high bride price, especially among Balkh residents;
- the legal process of divorce to allow victims obtain justice to protect victims from long life injuries caused by physical violence;
- the negative impacts of divorce and polygamy on both parties, men and women, and their children;
- the women's legal rights and the support they are entitled to receive if they are victims of sexual abuse;
- any type of sexual harassment by family and non-family members is a crime by law of Afghanistan;

- the police and security forces about human and women's rights standards to promote responsibility and respect for them;
- women's legal and Islamic rights on inheritance to promote women's economic independency and their legal rights.

*To Judicial organisations:*

- Promote access to formal justice for victims of GBV especially in rural areas of the province;
- Encourage legal marriage or marriage registration, especially among Herat residents, instead of in-house traditional marriage to reduce the risk of child marriage and polygamy;
- Support access to justice for those who are lacking registration of their marriages;
- Prioritise tackling the issue of corruption in the justice system to make sure the perpetrators of violence are punished.

*To Educational and Employment organisations:*

- Facilitate educational opportunities to girls especially in rural area. There is clear evidence that long distances between home and school girls will increase the likelihood of students dropping out from school especially in rural areas of the provinces;
- Creating part-time employment opportunities for mothers, so they can have a balance of work and household responsibilities and tackle the issue of psychological violence and negligence and raise public awareness about the right of women to work.

*To Health care organisation:*

- Improve women's access to health care centres to tackle the problem of infertility among women at risk of GBV, and publicising the possibility of fertility problems affecting men. Districts which are located in the remote areas of the provinces must be prioritised.

*To ACDEO:*

- It is suggested that the "reasons for calls" are recorded in three separate categories: 1) the primary forms of violence according to WHO typology of violence, 2) sub-forms of violence like divorce, forced marriage, etc 3) the main reason for violence for example, what is the reason for seeking divorce or forced marriage? The information was not recorded in some cases.
- A new section needs to be created in the data system to record the frequency and duration of violence. This information is useful for an in-depth analysis in order to find out for how long violent behaviour had been tolerated by a victim before seeking advice or help.
- According to the research findings children are more likely to be victims of forced marriage and labour exploitation. The number of siblings or children in a household can provide an explanation for the root cause of violence amongst children. The information gap could be filled by recording the number of siblings or household members of an underage caller.



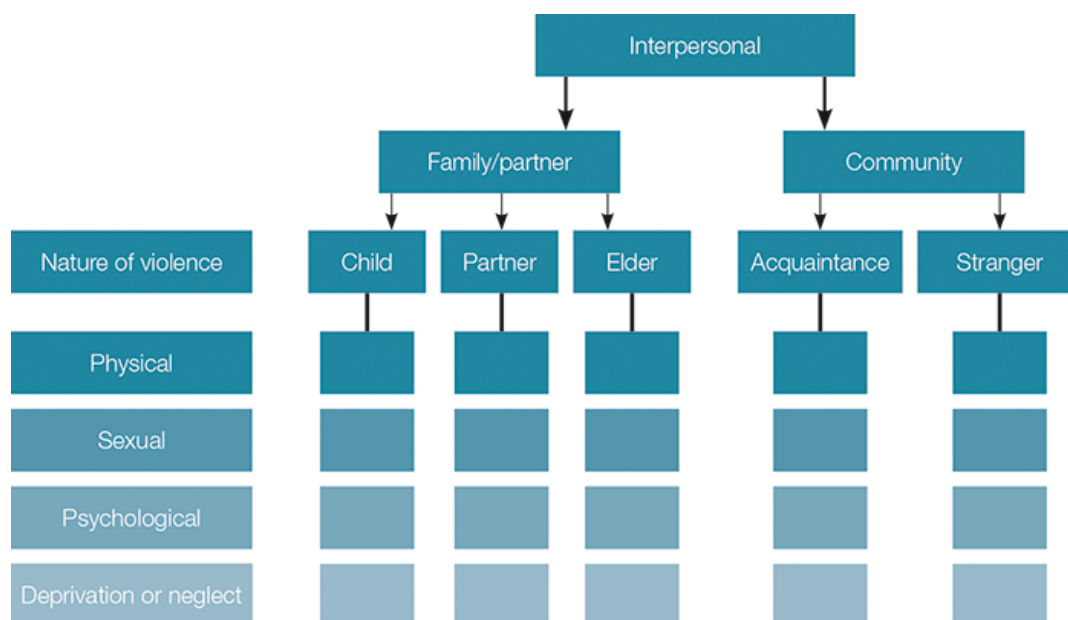
- In several cases the recorded demographic information in the comments section did not match with the demographic information in other columns for a caller. Those calls have been removed from the dataset of this report. To ensure the data accuracy, it is suggested that the supervisor of the counsellors monitors and cross-checks the recorded calls on a regular basis.
- To enable a deeper analysis it is suggested that the counsellors record the level of education, income and actual age of callers. The demographic information should be related to the victim of the violence rather than the caller.

*To ACDEO: Limitation and Further research*

- The Family Support Helpline records the demographic information of a caller rather than the victim. In several cases, the calls have been made by a friend or family members rather than the victim her/himself. The lack of access to the victims' demographic information has limited the robustness of the statistical analysis, such as a multi-variable regression test to define the characteristics of victims and perpetrators of violence.
- The key demographic and social indicators such as the education and income levels of individuals are missing from the current system. Education is an especially important indicator that can define the characteristics of the target group.
- Currently, calls to the Helpline internal system are recorded under multiple reasons. For example, a case of forced marriage is recorded under physical violence as well as sexual violence. Therefore, the findings had to be generalized rather than presenting a more specific analysis.
- A limited number of cases and information was available on some issues such as:
  - sexual harassment by a close male member of the family,
  - outside of marriage affairs among married women,
  - experience of neglect towards some working women,
  - experience of psychological violence among married men,

These new social phenomenal require further research to explain why such issues are occurring and what preventive measures could be taken.

## Annex I : The WHO Typology of Interpersonal Violence



### Definition of physical, sexual, psychological and deprivation violence:

These definitions have been prepared based on definitions of violence in the WHO Violence and Health report in 2002, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Community in 2018, Afghanistan Elimination of Violence Against Women law 2009 and Canada Provincial Government Guidance. It has been also benefited from advice of the ACDEO Director to meet the organisation's requirements and sensitivities.

#### *Physical Violence or Abuse:*

Physical abuse or violence includes actions intended to cause physical pain or injury to person, such as pushing, grabbing, slapping, hitting, or assaulting with a weapon or thrown object.

#### *Sexual Violence or Abuse:*

Sexual violence includes cases of rape, sexual harassment, forced pornography, forced marriages, forced prostitution, forced sodomy, husband relationship with others, child marriage including traditional practices of Baad and Baddal.

#### *Psychological Violence*

It includes threatening to harm the person or her or his family if she or he leaves; threats of violence; threats of abandonment; stalking / criminal harassment; destruction of personal property; verbal aggression; socially isolating the person; not allowing access to a telephone; not allowing a competent person to make decisions; inappropriately controlling the

person's activities; treating a person like a child or a servant; make or change a legal will or beneficiary; make or change an advance health care directive; give money or other possessions to relatives or other caregivers; and, do things the person doesn't want to do.

*Deprivation, Neglect or Denial of Legal Rights:*

Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not. For example, failing to meet the needs of a person who is unable to meet those needs alone; abandonment in a public setting; and, not remaining with a person who needs help. Disregarding necessities of daily living, including failing to provide adequate or necessary: nutrition or fluids; shelter. Medical neglect: ignoring special dietary requirements; not providing needed medications; not calling a physician; not reporting or taking action on a medical condition, injury or problem; and, not being aware of the possible negative effects of medications. Emotional neglect is failing to provide emotional support such as emotional security and encouragement. Educational neglect is the failure to provide the persons with education needs.

## Annex II : Provincial Profiles

*Socio-demographic information: BALKH<sup>44,45</sup>*



**1,382,155**

Comprising 4.9 % of national population



**38% Urban**

**62% Rural**



**51% Male**

**49% Femal**



**28.8%**

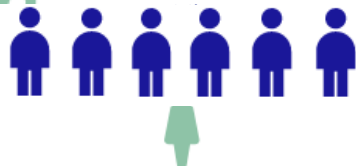
**59.3%**

Married population, 20+ years old

**ECONOMY**



**53.3%** of population are at working age group (Between ages of 15 to 64)



For each six men one woman had a job among people between ages of 15 to 64 years old.

*Major Incidents: BALKH*

- On April the 21<sup>st</sup> 2017, 140 members of the security forces were killed and more than 60 injured in an attack on the Afghan National Army Headquarters in Mazar-e- Sharif. This was carried out by the Taliban<sup>46</sup>.
- According to a UN report, 17% more security incidents were recorded in the first six months of 2018 than in 2017 in the northern region of the country<sup>47</sup>.

**MEDIA**



**96 TV** Active Channels



**216 Radio** Active Channels

**EDUCATION**



**41.9%** of people 15+ years old are literate.



For each five men there are three literate women among people over 15 years old.

**HEALTH**



**52** Deaths per 1000 live births



**845** Health Care Centres



**68** Deaths per 1000 live births



**1,483** Nurses and Doctors

Mortality rates for infants and under five years olds

<sup>44</sup> (CSO, 2018), (CSO, 2015)

<sup>45</sup> Married population are two separated questions in the original survey of CSO 2018

<sup>46</sup> (Council, 2017)

<sup>47</sup> (Council, 2018)

- On December the 18<sup>th</sup> 2017, the presidential office announced that President Ghani had approved the resignation of Atta Mohamad Noor, the long-term governor of Balkh, and appointed Engineer Mohammad Dawood as the new governor<sup>48</sup>. On December the 19<sup>th</sup>, Atta rejected the resignation and refused to leave office which caused tensions between the government and Jam’iyat-i Islami for several months<sup>49</sup>. Finally, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2018 Atta stepped down in favour of his successor when Noor and the president agreed on terms<sup>50</sup>. The province had been in a politically unstable situation for several months.
- On November 24<sup>th</sup> 2018, the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan recorded that out of 315 polling centres in Balkh, only 310 would be open on Election Day and that 41 polling stations were under a serious security threat. More than 85 candidates, including 22 women, had been nominated from Balkh province. Of the 58 candidates 8 men and 3 women could win a seat in Wolesi Jirga<sup>51</sup>.
- In recent years a severe drought had had a negative impact on people’s lives. According to an Integrated Food Phase Classification (IPC) report, people in Balkh have been facing severe food insecurity<sup>52</sup>.
- From March 2016 to March 2017, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs registered 352 cases of violence against women in Balkh province<sup>53</sup>.

*Socio-demographic information: BAMİYAN* <sup>54,55</sup>



**ECONOMY**

<sup>48</sup> (News, **50.9%** of population are at working age)  
<sup>49</sup> (News, group (Between ages of  
<sup>50</sup> (News, 15 to 64 years old).

<sup>51</sup> (Afghar....., .....

<sup>52</sup> (FAO, 2019)

<sup>53</sup> (MoWA, 2018)

<sup>54</sup> (CSO, 2018), (CSO, 2014)

<sup>55</sup> Married population are two separated groups in the original survey of CSO 2018.

**MEDIA**

**EDUCATION**

**HEALTH**



For each eight men, one woman had a job among people between ages of 15 to 64 years old.

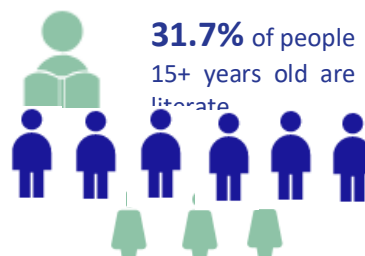
*Major Incidents: BAMBIYAN*



**4** TV  
Active Channels



**26** Radio  
Active Channels



For each one literate woman among people over 15 years old.

**31.7%** of people 15+ years old are literate



**86** deaths per 1000 live births



**122** deaths per 1000 live

Mortality rates for infants and under five years olds



**113** Health Care Centres



**351** Nurses and Doctors

- In July 2016, people of Bamiyan demonstrated for the fourth time against the change of the proposed route for the TUTAP, a national electricity project. They were asking the government to rethink its decision and stick with the original plan. The aim of the project was to install the necessary infrastructure for bringing electricity from central Asian countries to Afghanistan and Pakistan. It was initially planned that the project lines would pass through Bamiyan province, but later on it was changed to go through the mountainous areas of Salang instead.
- Bamiyan province is considered to be one of the safest areas in the country, but from November 2017 to January 2018 the Taliban had attacked districts in Bamiyan at least once every three months<sup>56</sup>. The total number of deaths and injuries has not been reported;
- In September 2018, more than 50 young Bamiyani students marched for peace in a distance of more than two kilometres<sup>57</sup>;
- From March 2016 to 2017 more than 198 cases of violence against women was recorded by Department of Ministry of Women’s Affairs in Bamiyan province<sup>58</sup>;
- The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission says that the number of GBV cases in the province tripled from 2015 to 2017<sup>59</sup>.

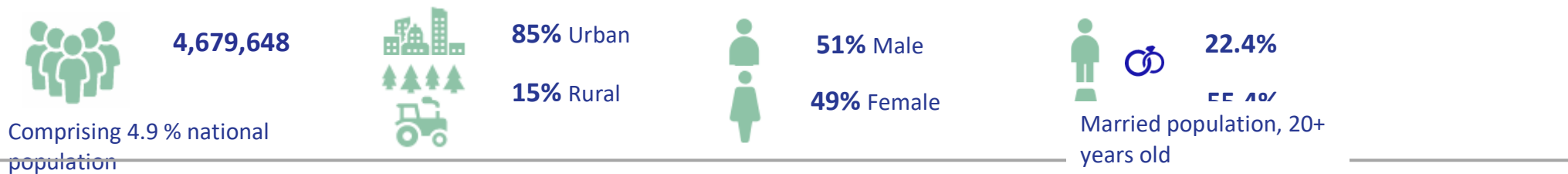
<sup>56</sup> (EASO, 2018)

<sup>57</sup> (YSPO, 2018)

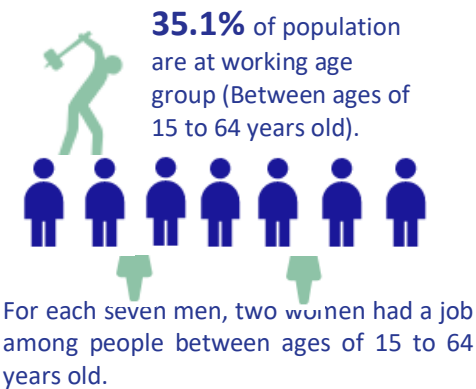
<sup>58</sup> (MoWA, 2018)

<sup>59</sup> (AIHRC, 2018)

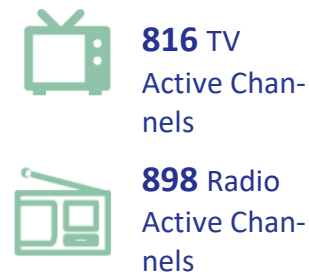
Socio-demographic information: KABUL <sup>60,61</sup>



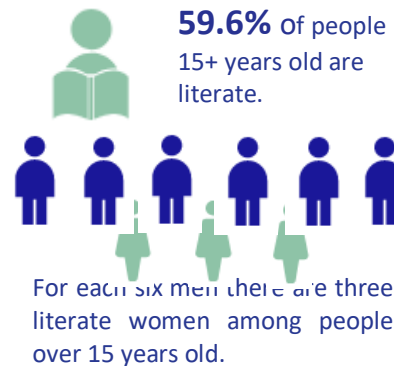
**ECONOMY**



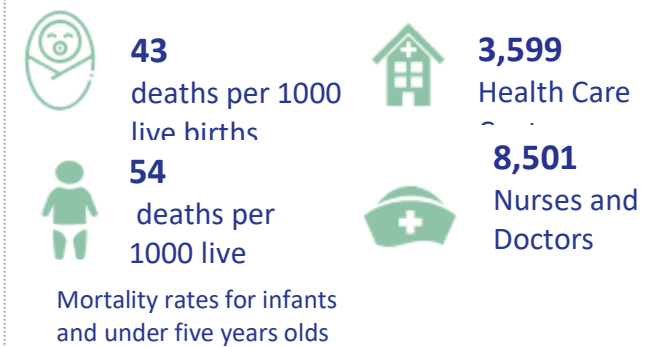
**MEDIA**



**EDUCATION**



**HEALTH**



<sup>60</sup> (CSO, 2018)

<sup>61</sup> Married population are two separated groups in the original survey of CSO 2018.

*Major Incidents: KABUL*

- In February 2018, during the meeting of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation, the government offered a comprehensive proposal for direct peace talks with the Taliban<sup>62</sup>. The prospect of peace has raised a glimmer of hope among Afghans and was followed by the people's peace movement during which a group of people marched a distance of 770-kilometres in support of peace<sup>63</sup>.
- In March 2018, the Asian Development Bank announced that the third phase of the TAPI pipeline project had been successfully completed. Afghanistan's ring road is another development project which connects 16 provinces and major cities including Kabul<sup>64</sup>.
- In October 2018 parliamentary elections took place across most of the country and presidential elections are scheduled for autumn 2019. The Afghanistan Independent Election Commission claims that more than 2 million Afghans participated in the parliamentary elections. The highest number of participants were from Kabul, 638,000 voters<sup>65</sup>.
- In 2018, 10,993 civilians' casualties were reported (3,804 deaths and 7,189 injured) 1866 casualties were Kabul residents. The first half of the year was described as marking the bloodiest time for civilian by the United Nation in comparison to the last years<sup>66</sup>.
- During the past few years Kabul citizens have not only suffered from insecurity but also starvation. Drought has affected a large area of the country, damaging summer crops including the wheat harvest. A report estimated that as a direct result of this drought, an additional two million Afghans would be affected by food insecurity. Residents in the Western part of the country were more likely to be affected from insecurity of food and shelter<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> (Council, 2017)

<sup>63</sup> (Sabawoon & Ruttig, 2018)

<sup>64</sup> (David, 2018)

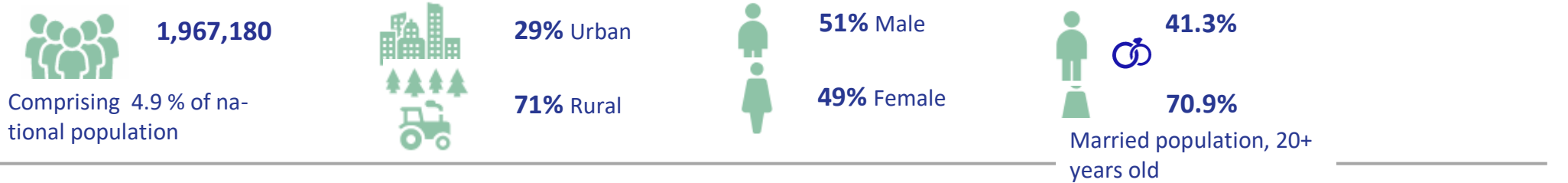
<sup>65</sup> (Tanzeem, 2018)

<sup>66</sup> (UNAMA, 2018)

<sup>67</sup> (OCHA, 2018)



Socio-demographic information: HERAT <sup>68,69</sup>

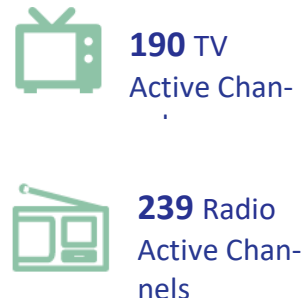


**ECONOMY**

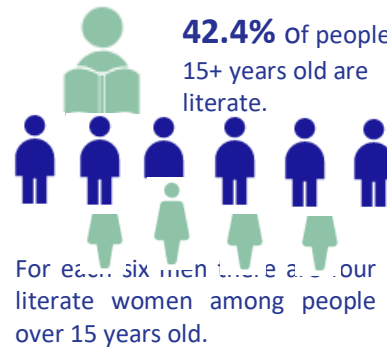


by Gender

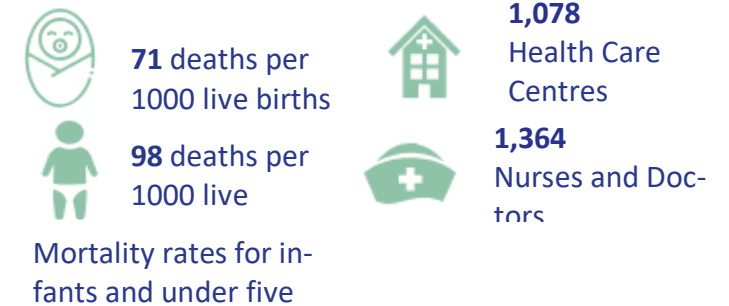
**MEDIA**



**EDUCATION**



**HEALTH**



ghan government announced that work on the TAPI pipeline project would start in Herat province.<sup>70</sup>

- UNAMA recorded a total of 95 deaths and 164 injuries which were caused by suicide attacks in 2018. The attacks included the burning of five school girls and the shooting of the headmaster of a girls' school <sup>71</sup>.
- Fourteen Afghan soldiers were killed and 21 captured in a planned attack in December 2018<sup>72</sup>. Despite the peace talks between the government and the Taliban the security threat from the Taliban remained the major concern of Herat residents.

<sup>68</sup> (CSO, 2018) (CSO, 2017)

<sup>69</sup> Married population are two separated groups in the original survey of CSO 2018.

<sup>70</sup> (Amanat, 2018)

<sup>71</sup> (UNAMA, 2018)

<sup>72</sup> (AlJazeera, 2018)

- In the last months of 2018 the Department of Ministry of Women's Affairs in Herat reported more than 600 cases of violence against women. These cases included those categorised as self-burning, and denial of education and freedom to work<sup>73</sup>.
- Herat residents have not only been suffering from armed attacks and domestic violence but a humanitarian crisis as well. A deadly drought in the last two years has caused serious problems of food insecurity, poverty and displacement. It is estimated that more than 15,000 people were displaced or forced to migrate<sup>74</sup>.
- The Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations (FAO) reports that over 300,00 people had been displaced in the Eastern part of the country. It is said that 80% of the displaced were unlikely to be able to return home due to lack of access to health care services, safe shelter and potable water<sup>75</sup>.

*Socio-demographic information: PANJSHIR<sup>76</sup>*

**POPULATION**



**158548**

Comprise of 4.9 % of national population



**51% Male**

**49% Female**

**MEDIA**



**5 TV**  
Active Channels



**17 Radio**  
Active Channels

**HEALTH**



**35**  
Health Care  
Centres



**46**  
Nurses and  
Doctors

<sup>73</sup> (Karimi, 2018)

<sup>74</sup> (FAO, 2019)

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> (CSO, 2018)

*Major Incidents: PANJSHIR*

- According to a BBC report in late November 2017, the Taliban had no presence in any of the seven districts of Panjshir province. It is the only province for which UNAMA did not report any civilian casualties in 2017. Only Pajhwok reported an attack that killed one person and wounded six others<sup>77</sup>.
- The Ministry of Women's Affairs recorded 47 cases of violence against women from Panjshir province from March 2016 to March 2017.

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<sup>77</sup> (EASO, 2018)

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