



The Impact of Sexual Violence on Women as a Form of Human Rights Violation

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History: Submitted/Received Februari 05, 2026 First Revised April 10, 2026 Accepted Mei 12, 2026 First Available online Juni 01, 2026 Publication Date Juni 23, 2026</p> <p>Keyword: Human rights violations, Psychological impact, Sexual violence, Women</p>	<p><i>Sexual violence against women remains a criminal issue that continues to rise across various sectors of society. Sexual violence constitutes a violation of human rights because it infringes upon women's right to protection and their human dignity. This study identified the factors contributing to sexual violence against women, such as gender inequality, male dominance, patriarchal culture, and a lack of awareness regarding compliance with existing laws. Sexual violence has a very significant impact, both psychologically and physically. Victims of sexual violence often experience mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, loss of self-confidence, and suicidal thoughts. Sexual violence against women is a serious problem that requires support from those closest to the victim during the recovery process.</i></p>

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the incidence of criminal cases has been on the rise, particularly cases of sexual violence against women. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that one-third of women worldwide or 30% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence (Sulaeman et al., 2022). Sexual violence against women is one of the most prevalent and alarming forms of human rights violations today. In reality, sexual violence can be experienced by anyone, regardless of age or gender. However, according to data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPPA), sexual violence is reported to occur more frequently among women than men. In 2025, the number of female victims was recorded at 24,194 cases, while the number of male victims was recorded at 6,005 cases (Simfoni PPA, 2025).

In 2023, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) recorded 401,975 cases of violence against women, with psychological violence accounting for 3,498 cases (41.55%), followed by physical violence at 2,081 cases (24.71%), sexual violence at 2,078 cases (24.69%), and economic violence at 762 cases, or 9.05%. These data indicate that sexual violence against women remains one of the most common forms of violence against women in Indonesia (Mustafainah et al. 2020). According to the Annual Report (CATAHU) from the National Commission on

Women, in 2017 there were incidents of sexual violence in the domestic (private) sphere, with 1,389 cases of rape and 1,266 cases of sexual assault. In the public sphere, sexual violence ranked first with 2,290 cases, followed by physical violence with 490 cases, and psychological violence with 83 cases, while rape cases ranked second with 1,389 cases. The National Commission on Women reported in 2018 that the number of sexual violence cases experienced by women had increased. Data shows 2,227 cases of sexual violence against girls, 5,167 cases of sexual violence against wives, and 1,873 cases of sexual violence against adolescent girls in the domestic (private) sphere. In the public sphere, violence reached 3,528 cases, with sexual violence ranking first at 2,670 cases, followed by physical violence at 466 cases, psychological violence at 466 cases, and psychological abuse at 466 cases (Mainake 2021).

Women's perceived physical weakness and the patriarchal cultural system also underlie why women are more frequently victims of sexual violence. Society tends to view harassment or violence against women even in the slightest form as acceptable, and often the women who are victims of harassment are blamed instead, for example, for dressing in a manner deemed inappropriate by standards of modesty (Sutiawati & Mappaselleng, 2020). This should not be used as an excuse for the surge in sexual violence cases because, as human beings, we possess inherent Human Rights (HR) that must be recognized, upheld, and protected by the state, the law, the government, and every individual to uphold human dignity and worth in accordance with Law No. 39 of 1999. The right to life, the right to family, the right to self-development, the right to justice, personal freedom, security, well-being, the right to participate in governance, and even special rights for women and children are also regulated in Law No. 39 of 1999. In fact, women are still viewed as a segment of society that lacks authority and power equal to men, and are even regarded merely as sexual objects

Sexual violence against victims has not only physical but also psychological consequences. Victims of sexual violence often experience mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, stress, feelings of worthlessness, and even despair about their lives. Victims of sexual violence who experience significant psychological trauma may even have suicidal thoughts (Fuadi, 2011). The wide range of mental health issues that sexual violence victims may face demonstrates that sexual violence can lead to fatal consequences and should not be taken lightly. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine how these traumatic experiences affect the mental well-being of victims, such as the emergence of stress, anxiety, depression, self-esteem issues, and others. This study is expected to provide a realistic picture of the emotional burden borne by victims and to encourage the provision of more appropriate and empathetic psychological support.

2. METHODS

In this study, a qualitative method was employed using a literature review approach. A literature review involves compiling existing references. The sources for this study were obtained from Google Scholar, with the selection criteria for journals being that they must be written in Indonesian and published between 2019-2025.

In this study, several limitations were established to ensure that the selected articles were more relevant to the title of this paper. First, the topic discussed is limited to the impact of sexual violence on women only; it does not include male victims of sexual violence. The primary focus is on the psychological impact and human rights violations associated with cases of sexual violence. Second, this study relies solely on scientific articles published in reputable journals to ensure the validity of the results. Consequently,

other sources that are unverified and inaccurate were not included in the analysis. Third, the timeframe for the published articles spans from 2019 to 2025 to ensure the selected data remains relevant to the issue of sexual violence against women in the current era and conditions; additionally, the analyzed articles are set in the context of Indonesia to ensure relevance to the local context.

In the literature selection, the researcher only selected articles that specifically addressed the impacts of sexual violence, its causal factors, and the link between sexual violence and human rights violations. Articles that discussed sexual violence against women but focused on other aspects without addressing these three elements were excluded from the analysis. The researcher prioritized sources that provide an in-depth discussion of the causal factors of sexual violence against women, the psychological impact of sexual violence on women, and the link between sexual violence and human rights violations. With these criteria in place, the research remains focused and directed, ensuring consistency and precision in the study's scope. The analyzed articles were synthesized thematically to produce in-depth, systematic, and relevant conclusions. This process was conducted in stages, ensuring the validity and quality of the data align with the research requirements. Through the literature review method, it is hoped that a comprehensive overview of the impact of sexual violence on women can be provided.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 The Link Between Sexual Violence Against Women and Human Rights Violations

No	Article Title	Year and Author's Name	Results
1	Legal Protection for Women Victims of Sexual Violence in the Criminal Justice System: A Human Rights Perspective	Yanny Tuharyati, Adilya Khulaiivah (2025)	Sexual violence is a very serious matter and should not be taken lightly, especially when it is experienced by women. There are many consequences resulting from such cases. Psychological trauma is one of the hardships they endure. Criminal acts of sexual violence are defined in Law No. 12, Articles 4 and 67, which govern the rights of victims.
2	The Provision of Restitution and Compensation as a Form of Protection for Victims of	Atikah Rahmi (2019)	Sexual violence is a crime that causes suffering and depression

	Sexual Crimes in the Indonesian Legal System		for victims. Victims are entitled to protection in the form of restitution, compensation, and recovery.
3	Protection of Human Rights for Women Who Are Victims of Rape and Rape Crimes	Faturohman Faturohman, Hurotun Afifah, Mitasari (2024)	The rape of women constitutes a violation of human rights and a crime that must be addressed through a firm and proper legal process. Perpetrators of sexual violence must be punished in accordance with the crimes they have committed under the criminal justice system.

From the articles we found, it is clear that sexual violence against women is a very serious offense and cannot be trivialized as mere fodder for jokes. Sexual violence constitutes a violation of human rights because it infringes upon fundamental human rights, particularly the rights of women. Therefore, perpetrators of sexual violence must be subject to strict penalties under the criminal justice system. Victims also have the right to protection, including restitution, compensation, and rehabilitation following the incident.

3.1.2 Factors Contributing to Sexual Violence Against Women

No	Article Title	Year and Author's Name	Results
1	Factors Contributing to Sexual Harassment and the Psychological Impact on Victims	Faizah Qurotul Ahyun, Benny Solehati, Prasetya (2022)	The causes of sexual violence can stem from the family, the community, or the individual. Sexual violence has psychological effects on victims, such as emotional instability, depression, feelings of shame or inferiority, a sense of being worthless, or a loss of self-confidence.

2	Causes of Sexual Violence Against Women	Natasya Dwi Nanda, Bimillati Arifanny Ikhwana, Jasmine Az-Zahra (2023)	The perception that sexual violence is commonplace must be changed. There are several underlying factors contributing to sexual violence against women. These include a concept of masculinity that emphasizes male strength and dominance, inequality between men and women, and unbalanced gender education.
3	Factors Contributing to Violence Against Women	Ridawati Sulaeman, Ni Made Wini Putri Febrina Sari, Dewi Purnamawati, Sukmawati (2022)	Three factors contribute to sexual violence more frequently than the other five factors combined. These are legal awareness, poverty, and early marriage.

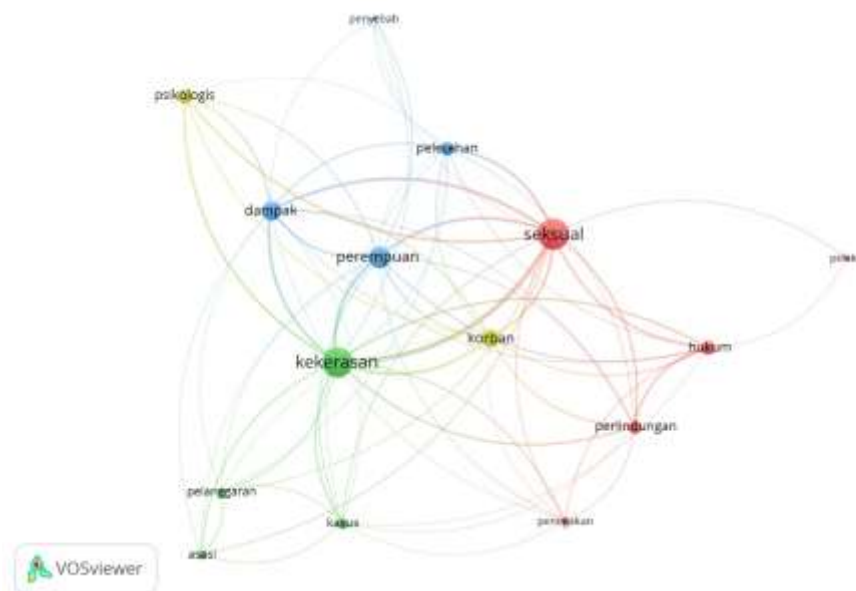
The article we found discusses the factors contributing to sexual violence against women. There are various factors behind the prevalence of sexual violence, such as family, the environment, and the individual herself. The perception that sexual violence is normal and not a wrongdoing also contributes to its prevalence, particularly among women, which ultimately relates to the issue of gender inequality. Legal awareness, poverty, and early marriage are the three primary factors underlying cases of sexual violence.

3.1.3 The Impact of Sexual Violence on Women's Mental Health

No	Article Title	Year and Author's Name	Results
1	The Psychological Impact of Sexual Violence on Women	Nazwa Aulia Khairunnisa, Farsya Nafilah Haryanto, Najwa Tazkiyatu Nufus, Ati Kusmawati (2025)	Sexual violence against women is a form of human rights violation that has both physical and psychological consequences. Psychologically, victims may experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, low self-

			esteem, and feelings of guilt and stigma.
2	The Impact of Sexual Violence on Women: A Systematic Review	Laela Rahmah Putri, Namira Infaka Putri Pembayun, Citra Wahyu Qolbiyah (2024)	Psychologically, victims of sexual violence experience mental health issues such as psychological trauma, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and depression, all of which have long-term effects on their mental health. Therefore, sexual violence against women has a significant impact.

From the articles we found, it is clear that sexual violence has very serious and significant consequences. Sexual violence can cause both physical and psychological harm. Physical consequences include injuries, wounds, bruises, and sexually transmitted diseases or infections. Psychologically, victims of sexual violence especially women may experience stress disorders, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and feelings of worthlessness or low self-esteem. It takes a considerable amount of time for victims to feel better or recover from the effects of sexual violence, both physical and psychological.



VOSviewer results on the issue of sexual violence

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 The Link Between Sexual Violence Against Women and Human Rights Violations

In various studies, the topic of sexual violence is often associated with women as the group most vulnerable to becoming victims. Sexual violence is not only viewed as a

private matter but also as a social issue linked to the gender gap that remains prevalent. The violence identified in this study includes not only rape but also degrading acts, exploitation, sexual coercion, and behavior that undermines women's dignity. Sexual violence frequently occurs within cultural and social structures that still position women as the weaker party. In other words, the root cause of sexual violence is gender inequality, where women are more often viewed as objects rather than subjects who have control over their own bodies.

Women are the most frequent victims of sexual violence, and they have a legal and social right to be protected from violence so that they can live free from fear of further violence, torture, and other cruel treatment that degrades human dignity and self-respect (Kurniawan, 2024). Sexual violence constitutes a violation of human rights because it infringes upon women's fundamental right to live in safety and free from fear.

Human rights are inherent to every human being as a creation of the One and Only God. These rights are His gift, which must be recognized, upheld, and protected by the state, the law, the government, and every individual for the sake of human honor, dignity, and worth (Yeni, 2014). Sexual crimes against women constitute a violation of the constitutional rights of citizens as outlined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD RI 1945). The rights in question, specifically the right to self-protection and the right to feel safe (Pasal 28G, Ayat 1), the right to live in physical and spiritual well-being and to have a good and healthy living environment (Pasal 28H, Ayat 1), and the right to be free from discriminatory treatment on any grounds (Pasal 28I, Ayat 2), the right to receive special assistance and treatment to obtain equal opportunities and benefits to achieve equality and justice (Pasal 28, Ayat 2), as well as the right to recognition, guarantees, protection, and fair legal certainty, and equal treatment before the law (Pasal 27, Ayat 1, and Pasal 28D, Ayat 1) (Rahmi Atikah, 2019).

3.2.2 Factors Contributing to Sexual Violence Against Women

Harassment, which is a form of sexual violence, is often dismissed as a joke, leading perpetrators to believe their actions are not serious. Such behavior frequently stems from the abuse of power or dominance within a group. In this context, women are the group most frequently subjected to violence due to societal norms that tend to view women as inferior. In many situations, the inequality between men and women makes women more vulnerable to harassment or control.

The causes of violence against women are also linked to the lack of enforcement of rights and legal protections. When laws are not strictly enforced, perpetrators feel safe to commit violence without facing consequences. Additionally, weak legal protections also deter women from reporting the violence they experience, leading to the continued recurrence of such acts.

According to Sulaeman Ridawati et al. (2022), there are five underlying factors contributing to sexual violence, namely:

1. Legal awareness
2. Patriarchal culture
3. Economic factors or poverty
4. Suspicions of infidelity
5. Early marriage

3.2.3 The Impact of Sexual Violence on Women's Mental Health

The high number of sexual violence cases results in negative and harmful effects on victims, particularly regarding women's mental health. Unfortunately, the adverse effects

of sexual violence cannot be avoided, as the violence itself causes victims to lose their self-esteem, withdraw from their social circles, and experience various other issues that impact their psychological well-being.

Various psychological disorders that can result from sexual violence include depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), panic disorder, emotional instability, and even thoughts of ending one's life. These psychological effects can persist for a long time and significantly impact women's lives, making effective support and intervention essential to help them overcome trauma and restore their quality of life (Putri Laela Rahmah, 2024). In addition to psychological disorders, sexual violence can also cause serious physical consequences. These may include physical injuries, wounds, bruises, and even the risk of infection or sexually transmitted diseases (Putri Laela Rahmah, 2024). Given the numerous psychological and physical impacts experienced by victims of sexual violence, support from those around them is crucial to their recovery process.

According to House (1981), there are three forms of social support that can be provided to victims of sexual violence:

1. Emotional Support: Emotional support provided through personal attention and recognition.
2. Informational Support: Providing the victim with the appropriate information.
3. Instrumental Support: This support takes the form of concrete physical or material actions.

4. CONCLUSION

From the various discussions above, it can be concluded that sexual violence against women is a serious issue closely linked to gender inequality and a patriarchal culture that remains deeply rooted in society. Women are often viewed as a weaker group, leading to various forms of violence being regarded as normal or not worth addressing. Sexual violence is also a form of human rights violation because it deprives women of their right to safety, self-protection, and fair treatment, as guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution. Low legal awareness, abuse of power, poor economic conditions, and weak enforcement of regulations contribute to the recurrence of this type of violence and make it difficult to stop.

Psychologically, victims are at risk of experiencing depression, anxiety, PTSD, and a loss of self-worth. Physically, victims are also at risk of injury and infection. These conditions indicate that victims' recovery requires tangible support—emotional support, accurate information, and direct on-the-ground assistance. Overall, sexual violence against women is not merely an individual issue but a humanitarian issue that requires serious attention from society and the state. Efforts in protection, education, and strict law enforcement are crucial steps to ensure that women's rights and dignity are truly protected.

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