

**YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES PROGRAMME**

**A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AWARENESS
CAMPAIGNS ON REDUCING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

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EMDevS – 4(19thBATCH)**

JUNE, 2025

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Executive Master
of Development Studies (EMDevS) Degree

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YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of awareness campaigns in reducing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Myanmar, focusing on how these campaigns influence public understanding, attitudes, and behaviors. With GBV being a pervasive human rights issue that affects millions worldwide, this research aims to assess the impact of various awareness initiatives on the recognition and prevention of GBV, specifically in the context of Myanmar. Utilizing a descriptive research methodology, the study incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collected from 120 respondents in Yangon. The results reveal that while awareness of GBV is widespread, there is a notable gap in understanding its lesser-recognized forms, such as economic and psychological violence. Furthermore, while legal awareness is moderate, many respondents remain unaware of the specific protections available under Myanmar law. The findings indicate that community-based and social media campaigns have been particularly effective, though access to these initiatives remains limited in rural and marginalized areas. Behavioral changes, including a higher willingness to intervene in GBV situations, were also observed, highlighting the positive influence of these campaigns. The study concludes with recommendations for expanding outreach to underserved communities, enhancing legal literacy, and emphasizing under-recognized forms of violence in future campaigns. This research contributes valuable insights into the design and implementation of more effective GBV awareness strategies in Myanmar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my most heartfelt appreciation to all those who supported me throughout the completion of this thesis. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the lecturers who taught us during the course of the program. I have greatly benefited from their knowledge, insights, and patient guidance, which expanded my understanding on the wider view of development.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to Professor Dr. Tin Tin Htwe, Rector of Yangon University of Economics, for her invaluable assistance and for giving me the opportunity to complete the Master of Development Studies program. Her leadership has been instrumental in my academic journey.

My sincere thanks also go to Professor Dr. Cho Cho Thein, Pro-Rector of Yangon University of Economics, for her continuous support and encouragement, which greatly contributed to my success in this program.

I am especially thankful to Professor Dr. Naw Htee Mue Loe Htoo, MDevS Programme Director and Head of the Department of Economics, for her unwavering guidance and support during my studies. Her advice has been critical to the completion of this thesis.

This thesis would not have been possible without the dedicated support of my supervisor, Dr. Naw Htee Mue Loe Htoo, MDevS Programme Director and Head of the Department of Economics, to whom I owe special thanks. I greatly appreciate the time she devoted to reviewing my work, offering corrections, and providing thoughtful feedback throughout the development of this study.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to all the volunteers from Women Peace and Humanitarian Project and my wonderful colleagues for their cooperation and for providing essential data for this research. Your encouragement and support were crucial in helping me complete this thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BID	Beneficiary Identification Data
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEN	Gender Equality Network
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
MPF	Myanmar Police Force
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSPAW	National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSWSC	One-Stop Women Support Centre
PoVAW	Protection and Prevention of Violence Against Women
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organization
WLO	Women-Led Organization
WPHF	Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most pervasive human rights violations worldwide, affecting millions of individuals, particularly women and girls. It manifests in various forms, including rape, physical assault, workplace harassment, child marriage, honor killings, economic violence, and female genital mutilation. Despite years of advocacy and policy reforms, the problem remains deeply entrenched in societies across the globe. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013), over 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. The situation in Myanmar is also concerning, with reports indicating that 1 in 5 women have witnessed violent behavior against another woman or girl in their neighborhood since the COVID-19 pandemic (MIMU, 2023). These statistics highlight the urgent need for effective interventions to prevent and address GBV, with awareness campaigns playing a crucial role in educating communities, changing social norms, and empowering individuals to take action.

The impact of GBV extends far beyond the immediate harm inflicted on survivors. It disrupts families, weakens communities, and perpetuates cycles of trauma and poverty. Research has shown that children who witness violence at home are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of violence in adulthood, reinforcing intergenerational cycles of abuse. Moreover, girls forced into child marriage or abusive relationships are often forced to drop out of school, limiting their educational opportunities and future economic independence. The economic burden of GBV is also significant; lost productivity due to intimate partner violence alone is estimated to cost between 1 and 2 percent of GDP, more than most countries spend on primary education (Duvvury et al., 2013). The financial cost is compounded by the emotional and psychological toll on survivors, many of whom struggle with depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

One of the key challenges in addressing GBV is the lack of awareness and access to information about existing laws and support services. In many cases, survivors do not report incidents due to fear of stigma, social pressure, or distrust in law enforcement. Furthermore, many professionals, including police officers, healthcare workers, and social workers, lack proper training to support GBV survivors effectively. This results in victims being retraumatized or denied justice due to insufficient legal and institutional support. Additionally, in many regions, safe places, psychological services, and social protection programs for survivors remain scarce, forcing women to remain in abusive situations due to financial and social constraints.

Given these challenges, awareness campaigns serve as a vital tool in the fight against GBV. Awareness-raising efforts help educate communities about the rights of women and girls, promote legal protections, and encourage victims to seek justice and support services. Campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and the #MeToo movement have demonstrated the power of public awareness in shifting societal attitudes, influencing policy changes, and empowering survivors to speak out. Awareness campaigns also play a critical role in challenging harmful gender norms that perpetuate violence, such as the belief that GBV is a private issue or that victims are to blame for their abuse.

Moreover, awareness initiatives can have a transformative impact on community engagement. By involving men and boys in conversations about GBV, campaigns can help reshape traditional notions of masculinity and foster a culture of zero tolerance for violence. Studies indicate that when men are actively engaged in GBV prevention efforts, there is a significant reduction in violence at both household and community levels. Additionally, targeted awareness campaigns in schools and workplaces can create safer environments by educating young people about healthy relationships, consent, and gender equality.

The economic and social benefits of effective awareness campaigns are also significant. By preventing GBV before it occurs, these campaigns reduce the long-term financial strain on households and governments. They also increase women's participation in the workforce by promoting safer workplaces and encouraging policies that support survivors. Countries that invest in comprehensive GBV awareness programs often see higher rates of gender equality, better economic growth, and stronger legal frameworks for protecting women's rights.

Despite their proven benefits, awareness campaigns must be carefully designed to be culturally relevant, inclusive, and accessible to all groups. In many communities, deeply entrenched patriarchal beliefs and resistance to change can limit the effectiveness of awareness efforts. Furthermore, rural and marginalized populations often have limited access to campaign materials, whether due to lack of internet connectivity, language barriers, or social isolation. To maximize impact, awareness initiatives must be multifaceted, combining media campaigns with community-based discussions, educational programs, and policy advocacy.

This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of awareness campaigns in reducing gender-based violence, improving knowledge and understanding of GBV, and empowering individuals to take action. By evaluating the impact of awareness efforts, the research identifies best practices, highlights gaps, and provides recommendations for strengthening future campaigns. Ultimately, raising awareness about GBV is not just about educating individuals; it is about transforming societies, influencing policy, and ensuring that every woman and girl can live free from violence.

Therefore, awareness campaigns are a powerful tool in preventing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality. They educate the public, empower survivors, and drive policy reforms that create safer communities. However, for these campaigns to be truly effective, they must be sustained, well-funded, and integrated into broader GBV prevention strategies. By investing in awareness efforts, societies can take a crucial step toward eliminating gender-based violence, fostering equality, and ensuring a future where all individuals can live with dignity and security.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study are

1. To assess the knowledge and understanding of gender-based violence
2. To examine the effectiveness of awareness campaigns in reducing gender-based violence.

1.3 Method of Study

This study uses a descriptive research approach, collecting primary data through self-administered questionnaires from 123 UN Women beneficiaries in

selected areas of Yangon and Ayeyarwady. The method aims to assess participants' awareness and perceptions of gender-based violence.

Secondary data collection complements the primary research by providing additional context and background information on gender-based violence awareness campaigns. Sources include data from the online resources, library materials, internet websites, relevant articles and Journals.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the Ayeyarwady and Yangon Regions, where a significant number of Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) beneficiaries are located. Although WPHF activities extend to other areas of Myanmar, these regions were selected based on accessibility and feasibility within the study's timeframe and resource constraints.

A descriptive research method was employed to examine the effectiveness of awareness campaigns in reducing gender-based violence (GBV), with attention to the perspectives of both male and female beneficiaries. Data was collected from 123 participants through in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires in WPHF project areas. While the study provides valuable insights, its geographic scope and reliance on qualitative data may limit generalizability to other regions.

1.5 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I presents the introduction, which includes the research background and objectives. Chapter II explores the literature on gender-based violence and the role of awareness campaigns in addressing it. Chapter III presents an empirical analysis of the awareness campaigns' impact on reducing gender-based violence. Chapter IV details the methods used for data collection and the analysis of the survey results. The study concludes with Chapter V, summarizing the findings and offering recommendations for future research and policy development.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) encompasses any harmful act, or threat of such act, perpetrated against an individual on the basis of their actual or perceived gender (UNFPA, 2022; NY OPDV, n.d.). This violence is fundamentally rooted in systemic gender inequality and the unequal power dynamics prevalent in society (UNFPA, 2022; UNICEF, n.d.). While disproportionately affecting women and girls, GBV can impact individuals of all genders, sexual orientations, and gender identities. It manifests in diverse forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and economic abuse, and carries profound social, economic, and health consequences for survivors and communities alike (UNFPA, 2022; UNICEF, n.d.), impeding human rights and development (UN, 1993).

The conceptual journey of GBV began with a critical focus on "Violence Against Women" (VAW). This was notably codified in the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which defined VAW as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life". This declaration was groundbreaking in recognizing VAW as a human rights violation. Over time, the term "Gender-Based Violence" (GBV) gained prominence to broaden this understanding. This evolution recognized that while women and girls undeniably bear the overwhelming burden of GBV due to entrenched patriarchal structures and systemic gender inequality, the underlying root causes (gender inequality, unequal power dynamics, discriminatory norms) can also lead to violence against individuals of any gender who do not conform to societal gender expectations or roles. This definitional evolution reflects a more nuanced and contemporary understanding of gender itself, moving beyond a strict binary male/female construct to include gender identity and expression. It acknowledges that violence can target individuals for

challenging these norms, thereby ensuring that advocacy, prevention, and response efforts are more inclusive and comprehensive.

2.1.1 Types of Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) manifests in several interrelated forms, each causing significant harm to the physical, psychological, social, or economic well-being of individuals. Below are the major types of GBV identified in both global and Myanmar contexts:

(i) Physical Violence

Physical violence is one of the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence (GBV), often inflicted through acts such as hitting, beating, and other physical harm. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), approximately 1 in 3 women worldwide experiences physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, with intimate partner violence being the most common form. Studies highlight that socioeconomic factors, patriarchal norms, and substance abuse significantly contribute to the prevalence of physical violence (Heise, 2012; Devries et al., 2014). The consequences of physical violence are severe, ranging from physical injuries and chronic pain to long-term mental health issues such as PTSD and depression (Ellsberg et al., 2008). Efforts to combat physical violence include legal reforms, community awareness campaigns, and support services for survivors (UN Women, 2020). However, challenges remain in addressing deeply rooted societal norms that perpetuate violence against women and girls.

(ii) Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is another severe form of GBV, encompassing acts such as rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. These violent acts are committed without the consent of the victim and often involve the use of force or coercion. Sexual violence has profound emotional, physical, and psychological impacts on survivors, which can last long after the incident itself. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) has reported that sexual violence is a significant global issue, affecting women, girls, and even men and boys in various contexts. In conflict zones like Myanmar, sexual violence is often used as a weapon of war, targeting women and girls to instill fear and assert control. The UN Human Rights Council (2019) documented the

widespread use of sexual violence in Myanmar, where ethnic conflicts have intensified the vulnerability of women and girls to such abuse.

(iii) Psychological/Emotional Violence

Psychological and emotional violence refers to non-physical forms of abuse that can have just as severe an impact on victims as physical violence. This type of GBV includes behaviors such as intimidation, threats, constant criticism, humiliation, and manipulation. Although psychological violence may not leave visible scars, its effects on a victim's mental health can be long-lasting. Parveen (2007) explored how gender awareness influenced the understanding and recognition of psychological abuse among rural women in Bangladesh, showing that many women do not recognize emotional abuse as a form of violence. Psychological violence can often be a tool used to exert control over a partner or family member, making it harder for victims to leave abusive situations. This form of GBV is often intertwined with intimate partner violence and is sometimes used alongside physical or sexual violence to dominate and control a victim.

(iv) Economic Violence

Economic abuse is a form of GBV that occurs when one partner controls the financial resources or restricts the economic independence of another. This type of violence can include behaviors such as withholding money, preventing the victim from working, or taking control of their income. Economic abuse is particularly harmful because it undermines a person's ability to support themselves and escape an abusive relationship. Duvvury et al. (2013) highlighted the economic costs associated with IPV, including the financial dependence that economic abuse creates, which leaves survivors vulnerable and unable to break free from the cycle of violence. Economic abuse is an often-overlooked but critical aspect of gender-based violence, and its impact can be far-reaching, limiting survivors' options and reinforcing their dependence on the abuser.

2.2 Factors Causing in Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Myanmar is driven by a combination of cultural, social, and informational factors that reinforce unequal power dynamics

between men and women. These causes are deeply embedded in everyday practices and perceptions, many of which were highlighted by participants in this study.

One of the primary contributing factors is limited public understanding of what constitutes GBV. Many individuals are familiar only with physical violence, while other forms such as psychological, economic, or sexual harassment are less recognized. This lack of awareness enables harmful behaviors to go unchallenged and often leads to underreporting.

Cultural norms and social stigma also play a significant role. In some communities, discussing GBV is considered taboo, and survivors may face blame or shame for speaking out. This discourages both victims and bystanders from reporting or intervening in cases of violence. The study findings reflect this, with some respondents unsure whether GBV affects only women, or uncertain about its legal status.

Furthermore, insufficient legal literacy and weak enforcement of laws contribute to the persistence of GBV. While some participants were aware that GBV is a criminal act, fewer could identify specific policies or legal protections. This gap highlights the need for awareness campaigns that not only raise general knowledge but also educate individuals on their rights and the systems in place to protect them. Finally, access to support services is uneven, especially in rural or underserved areas. When campaigns fail to reach these communities, existing power structures remain unchallenged, and survivors may continue to suffer in silence. GBV in Myanmar is sustained by a mix of misinformation, silence, cultural acceptance, and systemic gaps all of which must be addressed through targeted, inclusive awareness efforts.

2.3 Importance of Awareness in Reducing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Awareness campaigns play a crucial role in reducing gender-based violence (GBV) by increasing public consciousness, challenging harmful societal norms, and promoting behavioral change. In many societies, GBV remains normalized or unrecognized, making awareness efforts essential in educating individuals about its various forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse. These campaigns serve as educational tools that inform communities about the consequences of GBV and the importance of gender equality (UN Women, 2022; Heise, 2011). Research indicates that well-designed awareness programs, particularly those involving media, community engagement, and education, can shift attitudes and

reduce tolerance for violence (Michau et al., 2015). For example, initiatives such as the #MeToo movement and UNDP's gender sensitization programs have demonstrated how awareness efforts can empower survivors, mobilize collective action, and contribute to long-term societal change (UNDP, 2021; Madigan et al., 2018).

(i) Raising Public Consciousness on Gender-Based Violence

Raising public consciousness is the foundation of effective GBV prevention. Many individuals remain unaware of the full scope and impact of gender-based violence. Awareness campaigns help to define GBV in all its forms, making it visible and recognized as a serious social issue. Through public education, media messaging, and storytelling, these campaigns foster greater understanding and empathy, encouraging individuals to recognize abusive behaviors and support survivors.

(ii) Challenging Harmful Societal and Cultural Norms

One of the core objectives of awareness campaigns is to challenge the deep-rooted social and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality and justify violence. In many contexts, patriarchal values, rigid gender roles, and victim-blaming attitudes allow GBV to continue unchallenged. Campaigns use dialogue, community discussions, and cultural messaging to confront these norms, question traditional power dynamics, and promote alternative, equitable beliefs that reject violence in all forms.

(iii) Promoting Positive Behavior Change and Gender Equality

Awareness alone is not enough; campaigns must also inspire tangible change in individual and collective behaviors. Effective initiatives promote respectful relationships, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender-equitable attitudes. By involving men and boys, youth groups, and local leaders, these programs encourage community-wide commitments to ending GBV. Educational programs, role modeling, and advocacy all contribute to transforming social behaviors and reinforcing long-term norms of equality and nonviolence.

2.4 Laws and Regulations Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive violation of human rights that affects individuals across the world, predominantly women and girls. In response to

this global issue, various international, national, and regional legal frameworks have been established to address and combat the causes and consequences of GBV. These laws and regulations are designed to prevent violence, protect victims, provide legal remedies, and hold perpetrators accountable (UN Women, 2021). Key international conventions, national laws, and regional regulations aimed at reducing GBV, highlighting their significance and impact.

(i) International Legal Frameworks Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

International legal frameworks have been crucial in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) globally. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN in 1979, sets a legal foundation for preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality (UN General Assembly, 1979). The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) emphasizes that violence against women is a human rights violation, urging governments to take action (UN General Assembly, 1993). Additionally, the Istanbul Convention (2011) provides comprehensive guidelines for preventing and addressing GBV, particularly intimate partner and sexual violence (Council of Europe, 2011). These international instruments guide nations in establishing laws and policies to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

(ii) National and Regional Legal Instruments Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

National and regional legal instruments play a vital role in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) by providing legal protection for survivors and holding perpetrators accountable. For example, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in the United States, first enacted in 1994, provides funding for programs aimed at preventing domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and ensures survivors have access to legal remedies such as protection orders and housing assistance (U.S. Department of Justice, 2022). In Myanmar, the Domestic Violence (Prevention) Act (2010) offers legal protection to victims of domestic violence, although its implementation faces challenges. Additionally, the Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2018) in Myanmar raises the minimum age of marriage to 18, addressing one of the

most harmful practices linked to GBV (Girls Not Brides, 2023). These national laws help create a legal framework to combat GBV and protect victims.

(iii) Global and Regional Efforts to Combat GBV

International organizations, particularly the United Nations (UN), have played a central role in combatting gender-based violence (GBV) worldwide. The UN Security Council Resolutions (1325, 1820, and 1888) emphasize the protection of women and girls from sexual violence in conflict situations and highlight the importance of their participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery (UN Security Council, 2000, 2008, 2009). These resolutions have shaped policies that prioritize addressing GBV in conflict zones and have integrated gender perspectives into peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Furthermore, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has passed resolutions focusing on the economic and social impact of GBV, urging governments to implement national policies that address prevention, victim support, and the broader socio-economic consequences of violence (ECOSOC, 2021). These global and regional efforts have been crucial in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the fight against GBV.

2.6 Review of Previous Studies

Numerous studies have examined the causes, manifestations, and impacts of gender-based violence (GBV) across different cultural, economic, and political contexts. These studies offer critical insights into the effectiveness of interventions such as awareness campaigns, legal reforms, community engagement, and education-based strategies.

A foundational study by Heise (2011) emphasized the ecological model of GBV, identifying individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that contribute to violence. Heise's work highlighted that GBV is deeply rooted in structural inequalities and requires multi-layered responses. Michau et al. (2015) further advanced this by analyzing the impact of prevention programming in low- and middle-income countries, emphasizing the importance of combining community mobilization with mass media and institutional support to create sustainable behavior change.

Ellsberg et al. (2008) conducted a multi-country study on intimate partner violence and found that integrated interventions, including community activism and support services, significantly reduced violence in countries such as Uganda and Nicaragua. Their findings showed the necessity of tailoring GBV responses to local contexts while maintaining core principles of survivor support and community accountability.

In the context of South Asia, Parveen (2007) investigated the levels of awareness among rural women in Bangladesh and found that psychological and emotional forms of GBV were largely unrecognized, revealing critical gaps in public education. Similarly, Duvvury et al. (2013) examined the economic costs of GBV, demonstrating how financial abuse limits survivors' autonomy and access to resources, perpetuating dependency and cycles of violence.

Closer to Myanmar, Gender Equality Network (GEN, 2015) published a comprehensive study documenting GBV in the country, identifying key drivers such as cultural norms, limited legal literacy, and stigma. The study highlighted the effectiveness of community-based education and the involvement of men and boys in awareness efforts. Additionally, a UNFPA (2017) report revealed that targeted awareness campaigns in rural Myanmar had a significant impact on reducing tolerance for violence, particularly when messaging was adapted to local languages and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, global initiatives like the #MeToo movement and the UN Women's "HeForShe" campaign have been analyzed in academic literature as powerful examples of how digital platforms can shift public discourse and empower survivors (Madigan et al., 2018; UN Women, 2022). These movements have illustrated the transformative potential of survivor-led advocacy in influencing both societal attitudes and policy reforms.

Collectively, these studies affirm the importance of multi-sectoral, culturally sensitive approaches to combating GBV. They reinforce the need for awareness campaigns that not only educate the public and challenge norms but also support survivors and advocate for systemic change.

CHAPTER III

OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CAMPAIGNS IN MYANMAR

3.1 A Multilateral Effort by UN Agencies, International NGOs, and the Government

Various UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are actively engaged in addressing gender-based violence in Myanmar, despite significant operational challenges.

UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) is delivering critical services in sexual and reproductive health (SRH), gender-based violence (GBV), and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) across hard-hit regions. Their initiatives include reaching over 21,700 individuals with integrated GBV and MHPSS support, training 171 frontline providers, establishing four additional women and girls' safe spaces, and distributing nearly 21,000 dignity kits. UNFPA also supports 278 safe spaces for women and girls and has trained 1,220 personnel on the clinical management of rape. However, their emergency response plan for April to September 2025, requiring \$12 million, has only mobilized \$3.7 million (UNFPA,2024).

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) implements an integrated package of life-saving child protection services, encompassing mental health and psychosocial support, case management, explosive ordnance risk education, and awareness-raising on gender-based violence and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) (UNICEF, 2025).

UN Women has, from 2021 to 2023, reached over 16,000 women through a joint program with UNFPA on preventing and responding to gender-based violence. This included providing legal advice, psychosocial support, and referrals to services for 1,290 women. Over 800 women-headed households received cash assistance and food, alongside mental health and psychosocial support. UN Women also supports local Women-Led Organizations (WLOs) in leading GBV services, safe spaces, and inclusive recovery efforts (UN Women, 2023).

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) focuses on GBV prevention, risk mitigation, and response services, particularly for the Rohingya refugee response. Key components include safe spaces, life and vocational skills training, psychosocial support, community volunteers, engaging men in accountable practices (EMAP), women-led initiatives, and women's leadership training. They emphasize community-led GBV risk mapping and mitigation, capacity building for service providers, and accountability to affected populations through community-based complaints mechanisms (UNHCR,2024).

OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) plays a central role in coordinating gender-sensitive humanitarian responses. Their gender policy prioritizes robust gender analysis, enhancing women's meaningful participation in humanitarian decision-making, and prioritizing the prevention, mitigation, and response to GBV. OCHA works to ensure that humanitarian planning and assistance effectively identify and respond to the distinct needs and capabilities of women, girls, boys, and men in all their diversity (OCHA, 2024).

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has developed innovative approaches to capacity building for frontline GBV response staff, including a "Blended Curriculum" and the "ROSA App" for remote learning in low-connectivity settings. They have also developed "Guidelines for Mobile & Remote GBV Service Delivery" and a "Women & Girls' Safe Spaces Toolkit," which provides a global blueprint for women-led, context-tailored, community-informed programming (IRC, 2023).

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) provides comprehensive medical and psychological care to survivors of sexual violence. Their services include post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent STIs like HIV, emergency contraception, treatment for physical injuries, pregnancy tests, and psychological support. MSF emphasizes the urgency of seeking treatment within three days of an attack for maximum effectiveness of preventative medicines (MSF, 2024).

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, through its Department of Social Welfare (DSW), is mandated to provide social welfare services with a specific focus on women, children, and vulnerable groups. DSW implements programs aimed at strengthening gender equality and protection, utilizing prevention, protection, and response approaches. Prevention activities include conducting GBV awareness campaigns through public billboards and pamphlets. For response, DSW

operates 24-hour Helpline Services since November 2016, providing a confidential reporting mechanism for GBV cases. Well-trained DSW Case Managers are assigned across states and regions to systematically respond to complaints. DSW has also established One Stop Women Support Centers (OSWSC) in key cities, offering temporary shelter, healthcare, legal aid, psychosocial support (PSS), vocational training, and cash transfers for rehabilitation. Between March 2019 and July 2020, OSWSCs assisted 116 clients, and 811 cases received PSS and cash assistance. In 2019, DSW, in cooperation with UNFPA and UNICEF, developed and launched new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for violence against women, notably adapted from existing Child Protection SOPs. Additionally, DSW conducts vocational trainings in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps to promote gender equality, job opportunities, and family peace. Beyond GBV, DSW manages institutions for children in need of protection and child victims of exploitation, having handled 1217 child protection cases since 2009.

The Myanmar Police Force (MPF) plays a crucial role as a first responder to GBV incidents. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been collaborating with the MPF since 2016 to develop an effective GBV response system. This partnership includes training series for MPF officers and instructors on gender awareness, GBV, case management, and victim-oriented approaches. Over 1700 frontline officers received such training across various states and regions between October 2019 and January 2020. Efforts are underway to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for GBV situations and a standardized response guide for the MPF. The MPF is also reviewing its recruitment strategy to promote female participation and achieve greater gender balance within the force. Trainings emphasize that GBV cases must be treated seriously as crimes, not private family matters, and officers are encouraged to show kindness and empathy to victims. Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including pervasive impunity for perpetrators, sometimes involving police officers themselves. There is also a recognized lack of capacity, political will, or specialized training among police to intervene effectively in GBV cases. The historical overview of the insurance sector in Myanmar demonstrates a progression characterized by development, adjustment, and resilience. The origins of insurance practices in Myanmar can be traced back to ancient times when informal methods of sharing risks were present within communities.

3.2 The Journey of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Campaigns in Myanmar

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) continues to pose a significant and multifaceted challenge in Myanmar, exacerbated by armed conflict, internal displacement, entrenched gender norms, and limited legal protection for survivors (UN Women, 2021; Global Protection Cluster, 2020). In response, various stakeholders including United Nations (UN) agencies, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CSOs), and governmental bodies have implemented a range of awareness and prevention campaigns over the past decade. The trajectory of GBV campaigns in Myanmar reflects an evolution from short-term, emergency-focused responses to more structured, multi-sectoral and multi-platform strategies aimed at prevention, advocacy, and survivor support (UNFPA Myanmar, 2022).

(i) Early Campaigns and Emergency Response (2016–2017)

The earliest coordinated GBV awareness efforts in Myanmar were closely linked with humanitarian responses in disaster-affected regions. A prominent example is the “No More Silence” campaign, implemented by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in partnership with the Myanmar Medical Association and other civil society actors. Launched in 2016, this campaign targeted regions such as Ayeyarwady and Mandalay, where it provided mobile GBV case management, psychological first aid, distribution of dignity kits, and educational outreach. Over 12,000 women and girls were reportedly reached through this initiative, particularly in post-cyclone and flood-affected areas (UNFPA Myanmar, 2017). This phase highlighted the need for integrating GBV prevention into disaster response programming.

(ii) National Awareness Through the 16 Days of Activism (2019)

In 2019, Myanmar officially observed the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign at the national level for the first time. Organized under the theme “Generation Equality Stands Against Rape,” the initiative was led by the Myanmar National Committee for Women Affairs (MNCWA) with support from UN agencies and various ministries (UN Women Asia and the Pacific, 2020). The campaign marked a turning point in the formal recognition of GBV as a public concern and reflected the government’s willingness to engage with international advocacy frameworks. Key activities included public rallies, televised and radio

broadcasts, school-based gender dialogues, and legal awareness sessions promoting the draft Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) Law. This campaign represented Myanmar’s initial steps toward aligning national GBV prevention efforts with global standards.

(iii) Pandemic-Era Innovations (2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted public gatherings and in-person outreach. As a result, GBV campaigns in Myanmar adapted by shifting to digital platforms. The 2020 iteration of the 16 Days of Activism campaign focused on maintaining momentum through:

- Online webinars and virtual discussions on GBV and harmful gender norms,
- Social media outreach under the global slogan “Orange the World,”
- Dissemination of referral pathways for survivors, and
- Remote psychosocial and legal support services (UNFPA Myanmar, 2021).

These innovations reflected the resilience of GBV actors and their ability to sustain awareness-raising activities amid a nationwide health emergency.

(iv) Targeted Outreach and Community Engagement (2022)

In 2022, GBV awareness activities began to focus more deliberately on hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations, particularly migrant communities. Initiatives spearheaded by local organizations such as the New Myanmar Foundation and the Women Lead Resource Center extended programming to Myanmar migrants living in Thailand. These outreach campaigns included legal literacy sessions, community dialogues, and awareness-building workshops focused on survivor rights, reporting mechanisms, and cross-border protections (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), 2022). This phase of the GBV campaign journey was characterized by a strategic decentralization of advocacy, placing greater emphasis on inclusivity, grassroots leadership, and the unique risks faced by women in migration contexts.

(v) Multi-Platform and Creative Campaigning (2024–2025)

Recent GBV campaigns in Myanmar demonstrate a shift toward more creative, participatory, and multi-platform approaches. Three notable initiatives include:

- (a) WHO Myanmar Short Story Competition (2024): Launched during the 16 Days of Activism, this campaign invited the public to submit short stories that explore experiences of gender, violence, and resilience. The initiative aimed to engage diverse voices and foster societal reflection through narrative expression (WHO Myanmar, 2022a).
- (b) No Excuse Campaign (2024): A joint effort by the UN Country Team, this campaign combined digital advocacy with community-level events to promote investment in women's rights organizations and strengthen accountability systems. It emphasized the message that violence against women and girls is preventable and must be addressed through collective action (UN Myanmar, 2024).
- (c) National Ceremonies and Cultural Mobilization (2022–2024): Formal ceremonies held in Nay Pyi Taw and other urban centers brought together ministries, youth groups, religious leaders, and media partners to challenge traditional norms and advocate for systemic change (UN Women Myanmar, 2023). These high-level engagements reflect an expanding network of actors involved in GBV prevention and signal increased political and social buy-in.

The journey of GBV campaigns in Myanmar illustrates a growing recognition of the need for multi-sectoral coordination, survivor-centered programming, and inclusive public education. From the early humanitarian response campaigns to recent culturally embedded and media-savvy approaches, stakeholders have progressively deepened their engagement in the fight against gender-based violence. Nevertheless, persistent structural challenges such as the absence of a fully enacted legal framework (e.g., PoVAW), limited funding, and ongoing conflict continue to constrain the impact of these campaigns. Moving forward, the sustainability of GBV interventions will depend on continued collaboration between government actors, UN agencies, INGOs, CSOs, and local communities. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains a persistent and complex issue in Myanmar, intensified by conflict, displacement, and social norms. In response, a range of national and community-based campaigns have emerged over the past decade, each contributing to awareness, prevention, and support for survivors.

3.3 The Journey of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Policy in Myanmar

The policy response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Myanmar has undergone gradual development over the past decade, influenced by both international frameworks and local advocacy efforts. While some progress has been made through national plans and legal amendments, significant legislative and implementation gaps remain.

(i) National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) 2013–2022

One of the major policy milestones in addressing GBV in Myanmar is the launch of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) in 2013. Guided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), NSPAW outlined 12 critical areas of concern, including violence against women (Department of Social Welfare, 2013). The plan aimed to establish a coordinated national approach to promoting gender equality and preventing GBV. However, implementation was uneven, and progress often relied on support from international donors and civil society organizations (UN Women, 2020).

(ii) Draft Protection and Prevention of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) Law

The drafting of the Protection and Prevention of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) Law began in 2013 as an effort to establish a comprehensive legal framework to address GBV. The draft law proposed criminalizing domestic violence, marital rape, emotional and economic abuse, and sexual harassment. Although the draft received strong support from women's rights groups and technical guidance from UN agencies, it remains unpassed as of 2025 due to political resistance and institutional delays (Gender Equality Network, 2019).

(iii) Penal Code Amendments (2021)

Amendments to the Penal Code in 2021 marked a modest step forward by expanding legal definitions of sexual assault and increasing protections for minors. However, the reforms did not address key gaps such as the criminalization of marital rape, except where the spouse is under the age of 14 (Myanmar Legal Aid Network, 2022). These piecemeal changes highlight the need for a comprehensive and unified GBV law.

(iv) Institutional Mechanisms and Survivor Services

Several institutions have developed mechanisms to support GBV survivors, including the Department of Social Welfare's case management services, national helplines, and 'One Stop Crisis Centers' established in hospitals with support from UNFPA. However, services remain largely urban-centered and are often inaccessible in ethnic states or conflict-affected regions (UNFPA Myanmar, 2021).

(v) Role of Civil Society and International Partners

Civil society organizations have been instrumental in both advocacy and service delivery for GBV prevention and response. Groups such as the Gender Equality Network and international organizations like UN Women and UNFPA have collaborated on awareness campaigns, legal reform, and survivor-centered service provision (UN Women, 2021). The annual 16 Days of Activism Against GBV campaign remains a visible platform for such efforts.

(vi) Gaps and Ongoing Challenges

Despite these advancements, Myanmar still lacks a comprehensive and enforceable GBV law. Public awareness, legal literacy, and gender sensitivity among law enforcement remain limited. Cultural stigma, political instability, and weak institutional accountability continue to obstruct access to justice and survivor protection (GEN, 2020; UNDP Myanmar, 2022).

The journey of GBV policy in Myanmar reflects a growing but incomplete commitment to gender equality and violence prevention. While NSPAW and Penal Code reforms offer partial progress, the delay in passing the PoVAW Law underscores the critical need for stronger political will, institutional coordination, and sustained civil society engagement. For GBV policy to be truly effective, it must be inclusive, survivor-centered, and enforceable across all regions of Myanmar.

3.4 Service Delivery Mechanisms for GBV Survivors in Myanmar

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a critical human rights and public health issue in Myanmar, exacerbated by political instability, ongoing conflict, and recent natural disasters (UNFPA, 2025a; OCHA, 2024). Various government institutions, international organizations, and humanitarian actors have implemented and scaled up services to address the needs of GBV survivors. These services include

helplines, one-stop support centres, mobile outreach, case management, psychosocial support, legal aid, and dignity kit distribution (UN Women, 2023).

One of the central government-led interventions is the 24/7 national helpline “1566”, established by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) in November 2016. This hotline offers confidential counseling, legal referrals, and psychosocial support for women and girls who have experienced violence. It was implemented under the operational framework of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) 2013–2022 and is integrated with a network of service providers and referral pathways (Ministry of Information, 2024).

In addition to the helpline, the government has also established One-Stop Women Support Centres (OSWSCs) in major urban areas. As of 2024, seven OSWSCs were operational, offering multi-sectoral support, including legal aid, healthcare, shelter, and livelihood services. Between 2023 and early 2024, these centres supported approximately 1,370 survivors with legal services and 594 women with vocational and livelihood assistance, funded by the national budget and donor contributions (Ministry of Information, 2024).

Parallel to government efforts, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and its partners have played a key role in expanding GBV response services, particularly in conflict-affected and disaster-impacted areas. Following the 2025 earthquake, UNFPA deployed mobile health teams and safe spaces to deliver integrated sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and GBV services. From April to June 2025, over 21,700 individuals received case management, psychosocial first aid, and emergency referrals across Mandalay, Sagaing, and Nay Pyi Taw (UNFPA, 2025a; UNFPA, 2025b).

Additionally, UNFPA, in collaboration with the GBV Sub-Cluster, introduced the Myanmar Minimum Standards for GBV Hotlines in December 2021. These standards aim to ensure survivor-centered and confidential support through phone-based services, outlining 12 quality benchmarks for operators and responders (UNFPA, 2021). The standards have been widely adopted by hotline services nationwide and serve as a framework for consistent GBV response in humanitarian settings.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY ANALYSIS

4.1 Survey Profile

Myanmar continues to face a protracted crisis driven by ongoing conflict, natural disasters, and the residual impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These overlapping challenges have deepened humanitarian needs across the country, disproportionately affecting women and girls. In particular, women are shouldering increased burdens in unpaid care work, experiencing heightened food insecurity, and facing elevated risks of gender-based violence (GBV).

Amidst these challenges, local women-led and women's rights organizations remain at the forefront of the response. With a long-standing presence in Myanmar since 2013, UN Women has worked closely with these grassroots actors to enhance gender equality, strengthen women's leadership and participation in decision-making, and improve access to essential services for vulnerable women and girls. Their collaborative efforts aim to ensure that women and girls can meaningfully engage in, contribute to, and benefit from humanitarian relief and recovery processes.

As part of this ongoing support, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), with technical and managerial backing from UN Women Myanmar, provided funding to nine local women-led and women's rights organizations under its 2022 and 2023 regular funding cycles. These partner organizations played a key role in implementing GBV awareness campaigns and delivering critical services, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), social support, and livelihood interventions.

A total of 123 individuals from Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions participated in the survey. These areas were selected due to their active engagement in WPHF-funded projects led by trusted local partners. The majority of respondents were women, including community leaders, GBV survivors, and vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons (IDPs), single mothers, and individuals facing economic hardship.

Participants represented diverse age groups, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic contexts, providing a rich and inclusive dataset. Their responses offer insight into how UN Women’s strategic investment in local partnerships has helped raise awareness, increase service uptake, and strengthen community resilience in the face of ongoing challenges.

4.2 Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

According to the survey data, a total of 123 respondents participated in this study. Gender, Age, education and employment status are shown in Table 4.2.

Table (4.2) Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents

No.	Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	15	12%
		Female	108	88%
2	Age	Under 18	1	1%
		18-24	17	14%
		25-34	44	36%
		35-44	36	29%
		45 and above	25	20%
3	Education	Primary School	15	12%
		Middle School	12	10%
		High School	29	24%
		Bachelor	60	49%
		Master's degree	5	4%
		No Formal Education	2	2%
4	Employment Status	Agriculture	3	2%
		Daily wages worker	1	1%
		Government employee	3	2%
		NGO	8	7%
		Private sector employee	35	28%
		Self-employed	46	37%
		Student	11	9%
		Unemployed	16	13%
5	Location	Yangon	73	59%
		Ayeyarwady	50	41%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

As shown in Table 4.2, the majority of respondents were female (88%), while 12% were male. This strong female representation reflects the gendered nature of the topic and possibly greater female interest or availability to participate in GBV-related studies.

In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents (36%) were between 25 to 34 years old, followed by 35 to 44 years (29%), and 45 and above (20%). Participants aged 18 to 24 years made up 14%, and only 1% were under 18. This suggests that most respondents were adults in their active working years.

Regarding educational attainment, nearly half (49%) held a bachelor's degree, while 24% had completed high school. Others reported primary (12%), middle school (10%), or master's level (4%) education. A small portion (2%) had no formal education, showing a wide range of literacy levels among participants. With respect to employment status, the highest percentage were self-employed (37%), followed by private sector employees (28%). Other groups included the unemployed (13%), students (9%), and NGO staff (7%). Smaller proportions worked in government roles (2%), agriculture (2%), and as daily wage workers (1%).

In terms of location, 59% of respondents resided in Yangon Region, while 41% came from Ayeyarwady Region. These regions provide a mix of urban and rural perspectives relevant to GBV awareness and outreach.

4.3 Awareness and Understanding of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

To assess the respondents' awareness and understanding of gender-based violence (GBV), several dimensions were explored: whether they had heard of the term, their self-assessed knowledge levels, understanding of GBV types, and knowledge of legal aspects, the answer of respondents can be seen in table (4.3).

Table 4.3 Respondents' Awareness and Understanding of Gender-Based Violence

No.	Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Awareness of the Term Gender-Based Violence	Yes	117	95%
		No	6	5%
2	Awareness Level of Gender-Based Violence	Very low	4	3%
		Low	33	27%
		Moderate	57	46%
		High	25	20%
		Very high	4	3%
3	Identifying Gender-Based Violence	Physical violence (e.g., beating, dragging, sexual violence)	98	23%
		Psychological violence (e.g., threats, humiliation, isolation)	82	19%
		Sexual harassment (e.g., unwanted sexual comments, online harassment)	91	22%
		Economic violence (e.g., financial control, preventing someone from working)	54	13%
		Traditional violence (e.g., forced marriage, forced cohabitation with a rapist after assault)	23	5%
		Online violence (e.g., sharing intimate photos without consent, cyber threats)	73	17%
4	Do you think GBV only affects women?	Yes	15	12%
		No	100	81%
		No sure	8	7%
5	Aware of GBV is a criminal act under the law in Myanmar?	Yes	91	74%
		No	8	7%
		Not sure	24	20%
6	Aware of any laws or policies that protect GBV survivors	Yes, fully aware	24	20%
		Yes, partially aware	89	72%
		No, not aware at all	10	8%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

According to the survey results, the vast majority of respondents (95%) had heard of the term gender-based violence (GBV), while only 5% indicated they had not heard of it. Although awareness of the term was high, the depth of understanding varied. As shown in the table below, only 23% rated their knowledge as high or very high, while 46% rated their knowledge as moderate. A significant portion 30% rated their awareness as low or very low.

In identifying types of GBV, respondents were allowed to select multiple answers. Physical violence (23%) was the most identified form, followed by sexual harassment (22%) and psychological violence (19%). Online violence was also notably recognized by 17% of respondents. Economic violence (13%) and traditional forms of GBV such as forced marriage (5%) were less frequently identified, suggesting that these forms of violence may be under-recognized within the community.

When asked whether GBV only affects women, the majority (81%) correctly answered No, showing an inclusive understanding that GBV can affect all genders. However, 12% believed it only affects women, and 7% were unsure.

Legal awareness was also assessed. While 74% of respondents were aware that GBV is a criminal act under Myanmar law, 7% were unaware and 20% were unsure. Furthermore, when asked about their knowledge of laws or policies that protect survivors of GBV, only 20% said they were fully aware, while 72% were only partially aware. A small group (8%) admitted they were completely unaware of such legal protections.

These results indicate that while basic awareness of GBV is high, many respondents lack detailed knowledge particularly regarding non-physical forms of violence and legal rights and protections. This suggests a need for more comprehensive and legally focused awareness campaigns.

4.4 Exposure to Awareness Campaigns on GBV

Participants were asked about their exposure to GBV awareness campaigns, the sources of information, key messages, organizing bodies, and accessibility. The answers of respondents can be seen in table (4.4).

Table 4.4 Exposure to Awareness Campaigns on Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

No.	Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Exposure to GBV Campaigns	Yes, I have seen/heard it recently (within the past 3 months)	40	33%
		Yes, I have seen/heard it within the past year	52	42%
		Yes, but a long time ago	26	21%
		No exposure at all (have never seen or heard it)	5	4%
2	Sources of Campaign information	TV/Radio	1	1%
		Social media	29	24%
		Community Event	85	69%
		School/Workplace	4	3%
		Other	4	3%
3	Main Message of Campaign	GBV is an offense against the law	68	25%
		Types and Signs of GBV	83	31%
		Available assistance and emergency services for Victims	41	15%
		How should GBV be reported? (Nearest police station/help lines)	33	12%
		The community's responsibility to respond	28	10%
		Challenging cultural abuses/misuses	19	7%
4	Organizers of Campaigns	Government departments (e.g., Social Welfare, Ministry of Health)	10	4%
		Local NGOs (Domestic civil society organizations)	94	39%
		International organizations (UN agencies, INGOs)	59	24%
		Community-based groups (Village-level organizations)	68	28%
		Schools/Universities	5	2%
		Religious institutions	7	3%

5	Frequency of Encounter	Very Often	50	41%
		Sometime	57	46%
		Rarely	12	10%
		Never	4	3%
6	Accessibility of Campaigns	Yes (Campaigns reach both urban and rural communities)	25	20%
		No (Campaigns do not reach certain groups/areas)	82	67%
		Not sure	16	13%

Source: Survey Data 2025

Among respondents, 33% had seen or heard a campaign within the past three months, 42% within the past year, and 21% a long time ago. Only 4% had never been exposed. This suggests good reach but room for improvement.

Community events were the most common source of exposure (69%), followed by social media (24%). TV/radio and school-based exposure were minimal. The most recalled messages were about types and signs of GBV (31%) and that GBV is a crime (25%). Fewer respondents recalled messages about reporting mechanisms or cultural issues.

Local NGOs (39%) and community-based groups (28%) were the main campaign organizers, while government agencies (4%) and schools (2%) played a limited role.

In terms of frequency, 46% encountered campaigns sometimes and 41% very often. However, 67% believed campaigns are not accessible to everyone in their area, showing a clear need for broader and more inclusive outreach.

Table 4.5 Preferred Methods and Suggested Improvements for GBV Awareness Campaigns

No.	Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Campaign Methods for Reducing	Social media campaigns	22	18%
		Community-based discussions	61	50%
		School/university education programs	9	7%
		TV/radio broadcasts	4	3%
2	Suggested Improvements for Campaigns	Government policies and legal controls	27	22%
		Stronger institutional support – e.g. GBV reporting booths in police stations, fast-track courts	75	31%
		Engagement of village/religious leaders as campaign ambassadors	86	36%
		24/7 toll-free helplines with counselling services in local languages	26	11%
		GBV prevention education in school curriculum – age-appropriate content	20	8%
		Interactive methods: community theatre, sports events with GBV messages	14	6%
		Localized educational materials (e.g. Youth comic books, rural radio dramas in local languages)	10	4%
		Safe platforms for survivors to share stories – with anonymity options	7	3%
		Enhanced legal support	3	1%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Respondents were asked to identify the most effective types of GBV awareness campaigns in table (4.5), as well as the kinds of messages or support that would make such campaigns more impactful.

Half of the participants (50%) considered community-based discussions to be the most effective method for reducing GBV. This was followed by government policies and legal controls (22%) and social media campaigns (18%). School-based

programs, TV/radio broadcasts, and other formal channels were seen as less effective, each receiving less than 10% support.

When asked what would make campaigns more effective, the top recommendation (36%) was to involve village or religious leaders as campaign ambassadors. 31% suggested stronger institutional support, such as GBV reporting booths or fast-track courts. Other ideas included helplines, school curriculum integration, interactive methods, and local-language materials, although these received comparatively lower responses.

These results suggest that participants prefer localized, community-centered, and authority-supported approaches over mass media or top-down methods.

4.5 Effectiveness of Awareness Campaigns

To assess the effectiveness of GBV awareness campaigns, respondents were asked about their participation, knowledge gained, and changes in perspective. The following three tables present the findings, highlighting participants' knowledge improvement (Table 4.6), changes in attitudes and behaviors (Table 4.7), and the application of that knowledge through preventive and supportive actions (Table 4.8). Assessing the effectiveness of GBV awareness campaigns, respondents were asked about their participation, knowledge gained, and changes in perspective. The respondent's effectiveness of GBV awareness can be seen in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Effectiveness of GBV Awareness Campaigns

No.	Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Participation in GBV Campaigns	Yes	74	60%
		No	49	40%
2	Effectiveness in Increasing Knowledge	Not at all effective	2	2%
		Slightly effective	23	19%
		Moderately effective	23	19%
		Fairly effective	63	51%
		Extremely effective	12	10%
3	Change in Perspective After Campaign	Yes, changed significantly	42	34%
		Yes, changed sign	1	1%

Source: Survey Data 2025

60% of respondents had participated in at least one GBV awareness campaign, while 40% had not. Among those who participated, over half (51%) found the campaigns fairly effective, and 19% rated them moderately effective. A smaller group (10%) considered them extremely effective, while only 2% said they were not effective at all.

When asked about changes in attitude after attending a campaign, 65% reported a significant shift, and 34% noted a slight change. Only 1% said their attitude remained the same. These findings highlight the generally positive impact of campaigns on both awareness and perception of GBV.

Table 4.7 Impact of Awareness Campaigns on Behavior and Engagement

No.	Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Change in Perspective or Attitude After Campaign	Yes, changed significantly	94	76%
		Yes, changed slightly	27	22%
		No, no change occurred	2	2%
2	Willingness to Help Someone Help	Yes (I feel significantly more confident to help/speak up than before)	93	76%
		No (I don't feel any more confident than before)	3	2%
		Somewhat (My confidence has improved slightly)	22	18%
		Unsure	5	4%
3	Discussion About GBV With Others	Yes, I frequently discuss GBV with others	45	37%
		Yes, I occasionally discuss GBV with others	56	46%
		No, I haven't discussed GBV yet	22	18%
4	Belief That Campaigns Reduce GBV	Strongly agree	21	17%
		Somewhat agree	87	71%
		Not sure	15	12%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

After attending GBV awareness campaigns, 76% of respondents reported a significant change in perspective, and 22% noted a slight shift. Only 2% experienced no change. Most participants (76%) said they now feel significantly more confident in helping or speaking up against GBV, while 18% reported a moderate increase in confidence.

In terms of action, 28% had reported an incident, 11% had intervened directly, and 60% said they hadn't acted but would if needed. These results suggest the campaigns not only increased knowledge but also motivated people to consider intervention when necessary.

Additionally, 83% of respondents reported discussing GBV with others either frequently (37%) or occasionally (46%) highlighting improved community-level conversations. When asked whether these campaigns could reduce GBV in their area, 71% somewhat agreed and 17% strongly agreed, indicating a generally optimistic outlook.

Table 4.8 Preventive and Supportive Actions Related to GBV

No.	Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Knowledge of How to Report GBV	Yes, I know exactly how/where	48	39%
		Yes, I have some idea	62	50%
		No, I don't know at all	7	6%
		I need more information about GBV	6	5%
2	Action Taken to Prevent or Report GBV	Yes, I have intervened directly	15	12%
		Yes, I have reported an incident	35	28%
		No, but I would if needed	66	54%
		No, I wouldn't know how	7	6%
3	Specific Measures Taken	Reported to the relevant authorities	71	25%
		Direct intervention (e.g., immediately stopping the violence when it occurred, assisting the survivor)	28	10%
		Provided support to the woman or family members involved	68	24%
		Provided emotional support to the survivor (e.g., listening, encouraging them to access health services)	66	24%
		Shared lessons learned from awareness campaigns	46	16%

4	Perceived Support for Survivors Now	Yes, significantly more supportive	53	43%
		Yes, slightly more supportive	61	50%
		No change yet	6	5%
		Not sure	3	2%
5	Participation in GBV Prevention Training	Yes, I have participated	74	60%
		Plan to attend in future	15	12%
		No, not yet attended	25	20%
		Interested but haven't attended about GBV	9	7%
6	Awareness of Legal Protection for Survivors	Yes, fully aware	44	36%
		Yes, partially aware	66	54%
		No, not aware at all	5	4%
		Need more information	8	7%
7	Confidence That GBV Can Be Prevented	Extremely confident	28	23%
		Moderately confident	77	63%
		Slightly confident	15	12%
		Unsure	3	2%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

According to table (4. 8), knowledge of reporting mechanisms was relatively high, with 39% stating they knew exactly how and where to report a GBV incident, and 50% saying they had some idea. Only 11% lacked awareness or needed more information.

When asked if they had ever acted, 28% had reported an incident, and 12% had intervened directly. More than half (54%) had not acted but expressed a willingness to do so, while 6% were unsure how to respond. Among those who acted, the most common measures were reporting to authorities (25%), providing emotional support (24%), and supporting the woman or her family (24%). This indicates a strong inclination toward both formal and informal support strategies.

Most respondents believed survivors now receive more support than before.43% said support has significantly improved, and 50% observed some improvement.

Regarding GBV prevention training, 60% participated in workshops, while others expressed future interest. 54% were partially aware of legal protections for GBV survivors, and 36% were fully aware, suggesting room for legal literacy

improvement. Most participants felt optimistic about prevention effort 63% were moderately confident, and 23% were extremely confident that GBV can be prevented.

4.6 Summary of Key Findings

This chapter presented the analysis of data collected to assess the effectiveness of awareness campaigns on reducing gender-based violence (GBV). Key findings from the survey responses are summarized below:

Demographics: Most respondents were young adults, primarily female, with a majority having at least a university-level education. This demographic is likely to engage in awareness efforts and absorb campaign messaging.

Awareness and Understanding (4.2): Awareness of the term GBV was high (95%), though depth of understanding varied. Many respondents correctly identified physical, psychological, and sexual violence, but forms like economic or online violence were less recognized. Legal awareness was moderate, with only 20% fully aware of GBV laws.

Exposure to Campaigns (4.4): Most respondents have been exposed to campaigns within the past year, mostly through community events (69%) and social media (24%). Key messages remembered included types of GBV and its legal consequences.

Effectiveness of Campaigns (4.5): 60% participated in campaigns. Among them, 51% found the campaigns effective, and 76% reported a significant positive shift in perspective.

Preferred Methods (4.6): Community-based discussions (50%) were seen as the most effective awareness method, followed by government policy messaging and social media. Participants favored involving local leaders and increasing institutional support (e.g., reporting booths, helplines) to improve campaign effectiveness.

Behavioral Impact (4.7): Campaigns led to real behavior changes: 28% had reported GBV incidents, and 76% felt more confident to help. Additionally, most respondents believed that campaigns could reduce GBV in their communities.

Supportive Actions (4.8): While many had not yet acted, a majority were willing to intervene or report in the future. 60% attended prevention training, and most believed that support for survivors has improved. Legal awareness remains partial, and the confidence in GBV prevention efforts was generally high.

Overall, the findings suggest that GBV awareness campaigns have been moderately effective in increasing understanding, shifting attitudes, and encouraging

preventive action. However, there are notable gaps in legal knowledge, campaign accessibility in rural areas, and deeper recognition of non-physical forms of GBV. Strengthening institutional mechanisms and expanding local outreach could further improve the impact of such campaigns.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of awareness campaigns in reducing gender-based violence (GBV) in Myanmar by analyzing public awareness, perception, engagement, and behavior. The findings offer valuable insights into the reception of such campaigns and areas where improvements are needed.

While awareness of the term gender-based violence was high among respondents (95%), the depth of understanding varied significantly. Most participants were able to identify common forms of GBV, such as physical and sexual violence, but were less aware of less visible forms, including economic, psychological, and online violence. This suggests that although campaigns are effective in raising general awareness, they need to diversify their content to address these under-recognized forms of violence more thoroughly.

Another notable gap was in legal knowledge. Although 74% of respondents were aware that GBV is a criminal offense under Myanmar law, only 20% understood the specific legal protections available for survivors. This knowledge deficit hinders public accountability and limits the support available for survivors' seeking justice.

Most respondents had encountered a GBV awareness campaign within the past year, primarily through community events (69%) and social media (24%). These outreach methods were considered highly effective, highlighting the success of grassroots and digital strategies. However, 67% of participants felt that campaigns were not fully accessible, particularly in rural or marginalized communities. This indicates the need for more inclusive and far-reaching approaches to ensure that all groups benefit from these campaigns.

In terms of effectiveness, the campaigns successfully influenced knowledge and attitudes. Among participants, 76% reported a noticeable shift in perspective, and more than half rated the campaigns as effective in increasing their understanding of

GBV. These results underscore the potential of awareness campaigns to drive education and behavior change when executed effectively.

Behavioral changes were also evident. Many respondents indicated a greater willingness to intervene or help in GBV-related situations. Notably, 28% reported an incident, and 76% felt more confident in supporting survivors. This suggests that the campaigns fostered a greater sense of community responsibility and preparedness to act.

Additionally, 83% of respondents reported discussing GBV with others following exposure to these campaigns, signaling a positive shift toward open dialogue an essential step in breaking the silence surrounding GBV.

Respondents strongly favored community-based discussions (50%) and supported the involvement of village and religious leaders (36%) as campaign ambassadors. These locally rooted approaches were viewed as more relatable and trustworthy, particularly in conservative or rural settings.

Participants also highlighted the need for systemic improvements, such as enhanced institutional support (31%), better reporting mechanisms, 24/7 helplines, and the inclusion of GBV education in school curricula. These suggestions emphasize the importance of combining awareness with improved access to services and comprehensive support systems.

While many had attended GBV prevention training (60%), a significant number still lacked full knowledge of legal protection. Confidence in the possibility of GBV prevention was relatively high 63% of respondents expressed moderate confidence, and 23% were extremely confident, suggesting that when education and resources are available, the public is optimistic about reducing GBV.

5.2 Suggestions

This study confirms that GBV awareness campaigns in Myanmar are crucial for increasing public knowledge, changing perceptions, and promoting preventive action. These campaigns have successfully reached a broad segment of the population, primarily through community engagement and social media platforms. Respondents generally reacted positively to campaign efforts and, as a result, were more likely to intervene, support survivors, or speak out against GBV.

However, the findings also revealed several areas that require further attention. Access remains uneven, especially for those in rural, ethnic minority, or underserved regions.

Additionally, awareness remains limited regarding lesser-known forms of GBV (e.g., economic or psychological violence) and legal protections for survivors. To improve the impact and inclusivity of these campaigns, a more holistic, community-driven, and legally informed approach is needed.

Therefore, based on the study results, the following suggestions are proposed to enhance the future effectiveness of GBV awareness campaigns in Myanmar:

- Expand campaign coverage to rural and underserved areas, ensuring the inclusion of ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups.
- Emphasize lesser-known forms of GBV, such as economic abuse and online violence, in educational materials and campaign content.
- Enhance legal literacy through targeted messaging, community sessions, and partnerships with legal aid organizations.
- Engage local leaders, including village elders and religious figures, as campaign advocates to increase community trust and acceptance.
- Institutionalize GBV prevention education in school and university curricula with age-appropriate and culturally sensitive content.
- Strengthen reporting and support mechanisms, including 24/7 helplines, safe shelters, trained response teams, and accessible police support desks.
- Promote male and youth involvement through gender-inclusive messaging and interactive formats such as theater, peer education, and sports-based outreach.
- Implementing these strategies will help ensure that GBV awareness campaigns not only inform but also empower communities, reduce violence, and promote sustainable social change.

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APPENDIX - I

QUESTIONNAIRES

PART (A)

Section 1: Demographic Data

1. Age:

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44

2. Gender:

- Male
- Female

3. Education:

- Primary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Bachelor
- Master's degree
- Non-Formal Education

4. Employment Status

- Agriculture
- Daily wages worker
- Government employee
- NGO
- Private Sector employee
- Self-employed
- Student
- Unemployed

5. Location (City and State/Region): -----

Section 2: Awareness and Understanding of Gender Based Violence (GBV)

6. Have you ever heard of the term “Gender Based Violence (GBV)”:
 - Yes
 - No
7. How much awareness do you have about Gender Based Violence (GBV)?
 - Very Low
 - Low
 - Moderate
 - High
 - Very High
8. In your opinion, which of the following do you consider to be Gender Based Violence? (you can select more than one)
 - Physical violence (e.g., beating, dragging, sexual violence)
 - Psychological violence (e.g., threats, humiliation, isolation)
 - Sexual harassment (e.g., unwanted sexual comments, online harassment)
 - Economic violence (e.g., financial control, preventing someone from working)
 - Traditional violence (e.g., forced marriage, forced cohabitation with a rapist after assault)
 - Online violence (e.g., sharing intimate photos without consent, cyber threats)
9. Do you think GBV only affects women?
 - Yes
 - No
10. Do you know that GBV is a criminal act under the law in Myanmar?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
11. Are you aware of any laws or policies that protect GBV survivors?
 - Yes, fully aware
 - Yes, partially aware
 - No, not aware at all

Section 3: Exposure to Awareness Campaign on Gender Based Violence (GBV)

12. Where did you learn about the campaign?

- Yes, I have seen/heard it recently (within the past 3 months)
- Yes, I have seen/heard it within the past year
- Yes, but a long time ago
- No exposure at all (have never seen or heard it)

13. Have you ever participated in any activities aimed at raising awareness about Gender Based Violence?

- TV/Radio
- Social Media
- Community Event
- School/ Workplace
- Other

14. What was the main message of the GBV awareness campaign? (Multiple answers can be selected)

- GBV is an offense against the law
- Types and Signs of GBV
- Available assistance and emergency services for Victims
- How should GBV be reported? (Nearest police station/help lines)
- The community's responsibility to respond
- Challenging cultural abuse/misuses

15. Which of the following awareness campaign methods do you think is most effective for reducing GBV?

- Government policies and legal controls
- Stronger institutional support – e.g. GBV reporting booths in police stations, fast-track courts
- Engagement of village/religious leaders as campaign ambassadors
- 24/7 toll-free helplines with counseling services in local languages
- GBV prevention education in school curricula – age-appropriate content

- Interactive methods: community theater, sports events with GBV messages
- Localized educational materials (e.g. youth comic books, rural radio, dramas in local languages)
- Safe platforms for survivors to share stories-with anonymity options
- Enhanced legal support

16. Which organization led the awareness campaign? (Multiple answers can be selected)

- Government departments (e.g., Social Welfare, Ministry of Health)
- Local NGOs (Domestic civil society organizations)
- International organizations (UN agencies, INGOs)
- Community-based groups (Village-level organizations)
- Schools/Universities
- Religious institutions

17. How often do you encounter GBV awareness campaigns?

- Very Often
- Sometime
- Rarely
- Never

Section 4: Effectiveness of Awareness Gender Based Violence (GBV)

18. Do you think GBV awareness campaigns in your area are accessible to everyone in the community?

- Yes (Campaigns reach both urban and rural communities)
- No (Campaigns do not reach certain groups/areas)
- Not sure

19. Have you ever participated in awareness campaigns about gender-based violence (GBV)?

- Yes
- No

20. If you have participated, how effective do you think these campaigns were in increasing your knowledge about GBV?

- Not at all effective
- Slightly effective
- Moderately effective
- Fairly effective
- Extremely effective

21. After attending an awareness campaign, did your perspective or attitude about GBV change?

- Yes, changed significantly
- Yes, changed slightly
- No, no change occurred

22. Did the campaign increase your understanding of GBV?

- Significantly increased
- Slightly increased
- No change
- Decreased understanding
-

23. After attending an awareness campaign, did your perspective or attitude about GBV change?

- Yes, changed significantly
- Yes, changed slightly
- No, no change occurred

24. (After the GBV awareness campaigns) Do you now feel more confident to help someone or to speak out about GBV?

- Yes (I feel significantly more confident to help/speak up than before)
- No (I don't feel any more confident than before)
- Somewhat (My confidence has improved slightly)
- Unsure

25. After the awareness campaign, have you discussed GBV with others?

- Yes, I frequently discuss GBV with others
- Yes, I occasionally discuss GBV with others
- No, I haven't discussed GBV yet

26. Do you believe that GBV awareness campaigns can reduce the problem of GBV in your area?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Not sure

27. Please rate the effectiveness of the GBV awareness campaigns (1 = Not effective at all, 5 = Extremely effective).

- Not at all effective
- Slightly effective
- Moderately effective
- Fairly effective
- Extremely effective

28. Do you know how or where to report a GBV incident?

- Yes, I know exactly how/where
- Yes, I have some idea
- No, I don't know at all
- I need more information about GBV

29. Have you ever taken any action to prevent or report a gender-based violence incident?

- Yes, I have intervened directly
- Yes, I have reported an incident
- No, but I would if needed
- No, I wouldn't know how

30. If you have taken action, what specific measures did you undertake? (You may select all that apply)

- Direct intervention (e.g., immediately stopping the violence when it occurred, assisting the survivor)
- Provided support to the woman or family members involved
- Provided emotional support to the survivor (e.g., listening, encouraging them to access health services)
- Shared lessons learned from awareness campaigns

31. Have survivors of GBV received more support and assistance than before?
- Yes, significantly more supportive
 - Yes, slightly more supportive
 - No change yet
 - Not sure
32. Have you ever participated in GBV (Gender-Based Violence) prevention training sessions/discussions?
- Yes, I have participated
 - Plan to attend in future
 - No, not yet attended
33. Are you aware that there are legal protections for victims of GBV (Gender-Based Violence)?
- Yes, fully aware
 - Yes, partially aware
 - No, not aware at all
 - Need more information
34. Based on what you've learned from awareness campaigns, how confident are you that GBV (Gender-Based Violence) can be prevented?
- Extremely confident
 - Moderately confident
 - Slightly confident
 - Unsure