

Policy Brief

On Economic Cost of Violence Against Women



**VIOLENCE IS COSTLY
TODAY AND TOMORROW**

Ha Noi, 2021

Key Costs Due to Physical and/or Sexual Violence (IPV: Intimate Partner Violence)

- Women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in the past 12 months spend out of pocket, on average, **9,426,500 VND annually** as a direct result of the violence, **equivalent to 25% of their annual income**.
- Women and households also had **indirect income loss** via missed days of paid and unpaid work by the woman and her husband, as well as missed household care work in the past 12 months– **equivalent to a national estimate of 975 billion VND**.
- Women experiencing physical and sexual violence are likely to have **lower annual income by 30.8% (or approximately 12,642,300 VND)** compared to women not experiencing violence.
- Viet Nam's economy experiences a **productivity loss equivalent to 100,507 billion VND**, which is about 1.81% of 2018 GDP, due to lifetime experience of physical and/or sexual violence among ever partnered women aged 15 to 64 years.

The costs of physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner are a drain on the productivity of women which has significant consequences for the national economy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Viet Nam has recently approved the Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2021-2030. As the implementation of the strategy is operationalised, it is an opportune time to highlight the economic impacts of violence against women in Viet Nam. The government's goal is for Viet Nam to become a high-income economy by 2045 led by a productivity-driven development model, combining innovation with balanced development and allocation of private, public, human and natural capital. The strength of the Viet Nam economy is the high participation rate of women and men in economic activity – Viet Nam is one of the highest female labour force participation rates (73 per cent) in the world.²

This high level of participation by women in economic activity underlies the importance of understanding the economic impact of violence that so many women experience in their families. In response to this central concern, the National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019 specifically included the analysis on economic costs borne by women as a consequence of experiencing Violence Against Women (VAW). It is for the first time that cost questions have been incorporated into the National VAW Survey and thus is an innovation to advance cost research.

1 MOLISA, GSO, UNFPA (2020). National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019

2 The global average in 2019 is 47.1 for women aged 15 to 64. See World Bank data at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>

Why study costs of VAW?

Across countries, there is a growing recognition that VAW is not only a fundamental human rights violation but also has significant health and economic impacts. These impacts result in significant costs that are often not visible to policy makers. Specifically, estimates of the costs of VAW are critical to highlight that: a) violence is a key issue for economic development; and b) addressing VAW and reducing prevalence can result in significant economic gains for women, their families, communities and the government.

The economic impacts of VAW are multiple and range from short terms to medium and long-term impacts. Immediate impacts include physical or mental harm, inability to do work paid or unpaid (absenteeism). On the other hand medium term to long term impacts include loss of quality of life due to chronic pain and suffering, loss of productivity, reduced labour force participation of women or intergenerational loss such as lower educational achievement for victims' children thus affecting their future income potential. In this costing study, the analysis focuses on the immediate impacts to establish the annual cost incurred by ever partnered women due to the experience of physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months. Productivity loss for the economy, however, was measured as the income differential between women who experienced violence and those who do not.

Methodology

The costs included in the estimation classified into three categories: a) out of pocket costs incurred by women and their households to access services to mitigate the consequences of IPV; b) indirect cost due to missed days of work (paid or unpaid) and care work; and c) overall indirect/opportunity cost for the economy, which captures the reality that women experiencing violence not only miss work but are also less productive while at work. The overall output of the economy is affected by this productivity loss due to absenteeism as well as lower productivity among women who experience VAW.

Table 1: Key Costs included in the Estimate of Cost of Inaction

Costs Elements	Estimate of Cost of Inaction
Out of pocket cost	Healthcare expenses, police fees (formal and informal, including for arrest), shelter, filing cases, costs incurred in courts, replacement costs for property damaged, transport costs
Indirect cost	Days lost from paid work by the women and their husbands, days lost in unpaid household production and reproduction (commonly referred to as care work)
Productivity Loss for the economy	Measured as the income differential between women experiencing violence and those not experiencing violence

Data Collected for Estimation of Costs of VAW

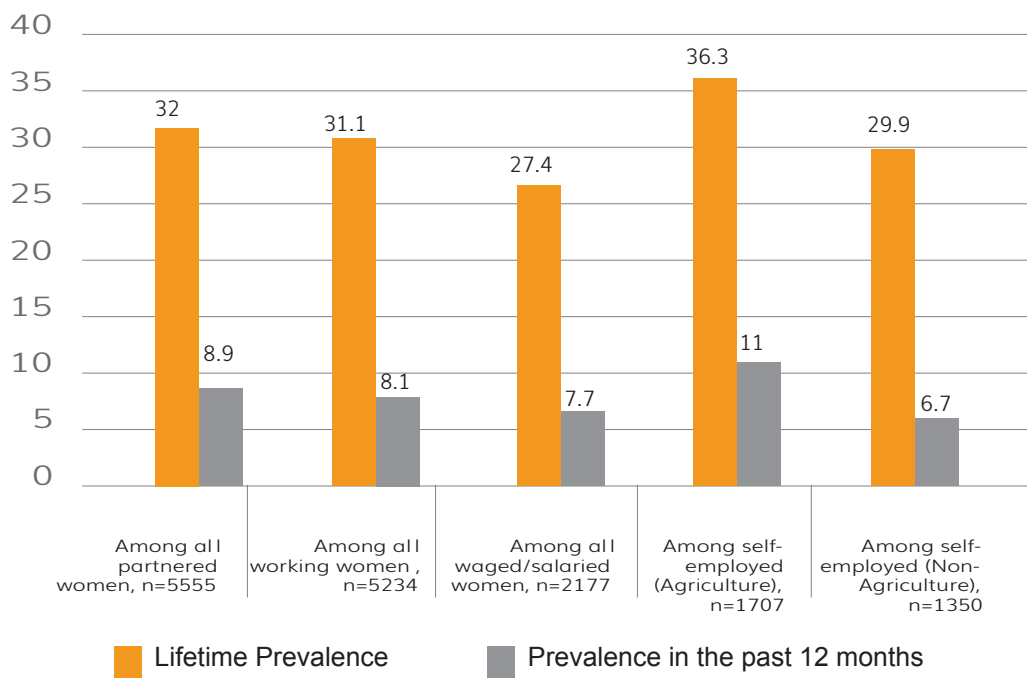
- **All women surveyed** were asked more detailed questions about their employment and earnings to understand the impacts of costs in relation to their income.
- **Women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence and were injured** were asked questions about any costs incurred associated with those injuries.
- Additionally, all women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months were asked
 - about their help seeking in the last 12 months from various agencies such as police, courts, women's organizations, community leaders and the associated expenses incurred.
 - if there was any property damage or damage to goods that needed to be replaced and the amount they incurred.
 - if they had left their home and sought refuge with parents, siblings, friends, etc. and the expenses incurred as result.
 - if they missed work as a result of violence experienced, if their husbands missed work.
 - if they missed household work, including care work due to the violence.

II. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN VIET NAM

The National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019 found progress in Viet Nam with a slight decline in the prevalence of VAW from 2010. However, VAW remains an issue of concern with two in three women (63 per cent) experiencing physical, sexual, psychological, and/or economic abuse by their husbands in their lifetime, and one in three women (32 per cent) experience such violence in the past 12 months. Violence experience of women cuts across regions, and demographic characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and location.

The life time experience of physical and/or sexual violence among working women is 31.1 per cent, virtually equivalent to the prevalence of 32 per cent among ever-partnered women.

Figure 1: Prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence among working women, Viet Nam, 2019 (percentage)



Among working women, the lifetime and current physical and sexual violence does vary with the nature of employment. Women who are self-employed in agriculture have the highest prevalence (36 per cent in their life time and 11 per cent in the past 12 months respectively). However, the prevalence rates are not substantially different for women self-employed in non-agricultural activities or women who are engaged in waged/salaried employment (lifetime prevalence ranging 29.9 per cent to 27.4 per cent respectively). Though when we take into account differences between working women in terms of age, education, partner's characteristics, past experience of violence, and attitudes to beating, the results indicate that in actuality women in wage/salaried employment have higher risk of violence compared to women not working. The level of violence among working women is indeed a matter of concern with potentially serious implications for the economy overall and for employers in particular. Regardless, the level of violence among working women is a matter of concern with potentially serious implications for the economy overall and for employers in particular. An equal concern is that women who contributed more to household income than their husbands or partners were at significantly higher risk of VAW than women contributing less than husband/partner or not all to household income.³

³ See National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019, Chapter 12

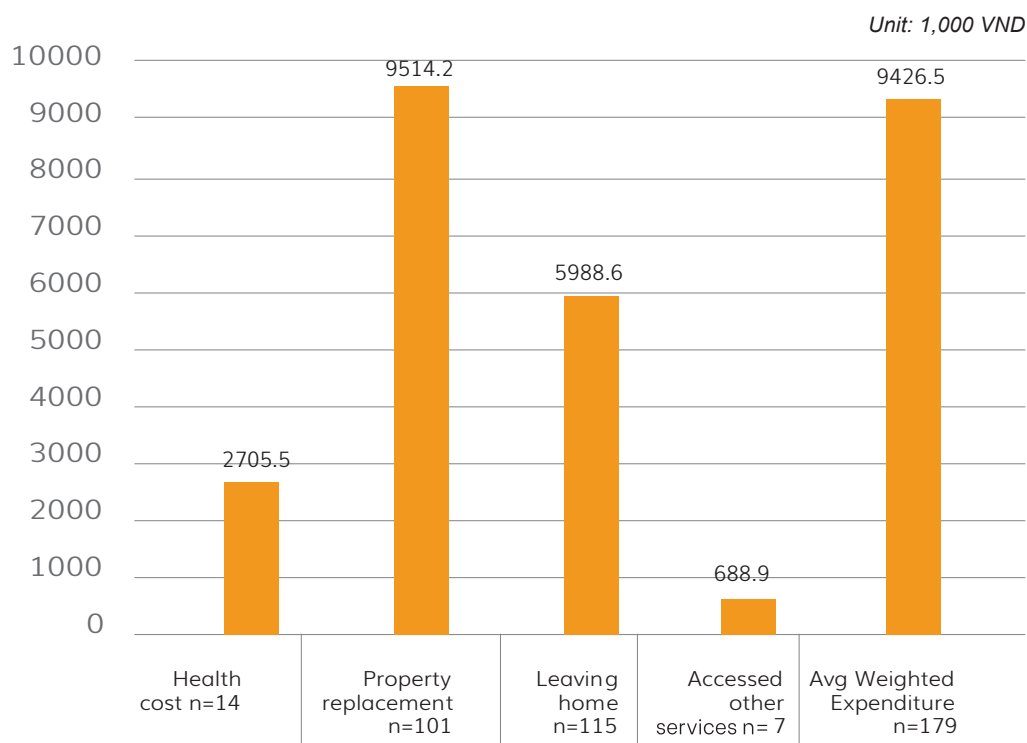
III. ECONOMIC COSTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN VIET NAM

The results of the costing study highlight the significant costs that women experiencing VAW incur.

Out-of-Pocket-Expenditures

First and foremost, women experiencing physical and sexual violence reported that they incurred expenditures from their own resources to treat and mitigate the consequences of violence in the last 12 months. On the whole, women's help-seeking from formal services such as health, police, courts, leaders, and women's organisations was quite low ranging for 8% for medical treatment to about 1 per cent women for other legal and counselling services⁴. Additionally, among those few women who sought assistance, smaller proportions reported incurring expenditure for health care, legal services or assistance from local leaders or women's organisations. In contrast, higher proportions of women reported expenditures associated with repairing/replacing damaged goods and leaving home in the last 12 months due to physical and/or sexual violence. Overall, the weighted annual average out-of-pocket expenditure across all women who reported expenditures came to 9,426,500 VND) or about 25.5% of the annual income of the women who incurred expenses due to experiences of physical and/or sexual violence (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Average annual out of pocket expenditure reported by women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months Viet Nam, 2019



4 See National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019, Chapter 10

The national estimate of this out-of-pocket expenditure comes to nearly 9,292 billion VND, which amounts to 0.1667 per cent of 2018 GDP or about 0.225 per cent of final household consumption expenditure in 2018.

Indirect/Opportunity Cost: Missed Work and Care Work

Missed days of work by women and husbands represent the foregone income for households. Approximately 12% of working women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence reported missing work on average for about 8 days. An additional 7% of all women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months report missing care work for about 8 days per year. A slightly larger proportion (9.7%) of women experiencing violence in the last 12 months reported that their husbands missed work on average for 6 days. The national estimates of workdays lost due to physical and sexual violence experienced by women in the last 12 months and the foregone income are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Workdays missed and associated loss of income^a due to physical and/or sexual violence, Viet Nam, 2019

Missed days	Sample estimates			Total Number of women reporting physical and/or sexual IPV, last 12months	Lost Workdays	National estimate - LOSS OF INCOME (000VND)		
	Mean days	Proportion reporting missed work	Average daily income (000 VND)			Loss of income	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
Missed work	7.9	0.1213	153.6	2,188,191	2,081,659	322,116,066	231,285,032	412,947,100
Waged/salaried	6.6	0.0663	222.0	800,991	351,672	78,078,338	37903128	118253547
Self-employed (Agriculture)	10.3	0.1481	59.6	961,588	1,460,509	87,051,169	56,131,543	117,970,795
Self-employed (Non-agriculture)	4.0	0.1607	174.3	424,357	269,478	46,965,066	30,131,431	63,798,700
Missed work of husband	6.0	0.0972	281.5	2,557,556	1,498,564	421,785,557	223,268,272	620,302,841
Missed care work	8.1	0.0696	153.6	2,659,464	1,503,637	230,936,209	125,954,815	335,917,604
TOTAL						974,837,832	580,508,119	1,369,167,545

^a Income was estimated by deriving wage for each women who experienced violence based on their occupation and sector of work. The derived average wage was used to also monetise the missed care work days by all experiencing violence and reporting missed work.

Four important findings are:

- 1) The overall loss of income due to missed workdays, including missed care workdays, comes to about approximately 975 billion VND and ranges from a minimum 581 to 1369 billion VND.
- 2) Nearly **70 per cent of the total workdays lost by working women was by women engaged in agricultural self-employment**, which has impacts on the output of the agricultural sector and more importantly on the food self-sufficiency of subsistence agricultural households.
- 3) Out of total workdays missed due to violence, **about 40% of the days are missed by husbands**. The economic impact of physical and sexual violence by husbands is not limited to the women alone experiencing the abuse. The loss of workdays by husbands is not unique to Viet Nam but has been reported in other low and middle countries⁵. This finding suggests that violence by husbands has a potentially much wider impact on the economy than recognised by policy makers and needs to be more systematically explored.
- 4) Household welfare is also affected as violence impacts ability of women to do care work. The impact on care work is significant - **nearly 30 per cent of total workdays missed were accounted by missed care work days**. The reduction in care work has important implications for the well-being of families, given care work is seen as essential to the sustenance and survival of families, particularly among the poor.

Productivity Loss

An important dimension of macro-cost is the productivity loss due to experience of domestic violence by an intimate partner. In the National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019, women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence report that they had poorer health status and more problems in terms of concentration or disruption in the workplace. In fact, women experiencing physical and sexual violence by husbands in the lifetime were more than three times as likely to score as probable to have a mental illness as compared with women who have not experienced husband/partner violence.⁶ A consequence of

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