



WHO Study on Adolescent Girls

For Prelims: [WHO](#), [Legal property rights](#), [Inheritance rights](#), [Gender equality](#), [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#), [Mahila Shakti Kendra](#), [National Creche Scheme](#), [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#)

For Mains: [Issues Related to Women](#), [Women's Issues](#)

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, a [World Health Organization](#) study published in the Lancet medical journal revealed that **adolescent girls aged between 15 and 19 who have been in relationships have experienced physical or sexual violence.**

- The survey was conducted with thousands of adolescent girls from 154 countries and regions.

What are the Key Highlights of the WHO Study on Adolescent Girls?

- **Key Highlights:**
 - **Prevalence:** It reveals that **nearly a quarter (24%) of [adolescent girls](#)** who have been in a relationship have **experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence** by age 20.
 - Approximately 1 in 6 (16%) adolescent girls reported experiencing such violence in the past year.
 - **No country is currently on track** to eliminate violence against women and girls by the 2030 [Sustainable Development Goal \(Goal 5\)](#) target date.
 - **Regional Variations:** **The highest prevalence rates are in Oceania (47%) (e.g. 49% of girls reporting intimate partner violence in Papua New Guinea) and 40% in central sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. In the Democratic Republic of Congo 42% reporting intimate partner violence).**
 - The **lowest rates are in central Europe (10%) and central Asia (11%).**
- **Factors Influencing Prevalence:** **Higher rates of violence are found in lower-income countries, regions with fewer girls in secondary education, and areas where girls have weaker legal property ownership and inheritance rights.**
 - **Child marriage significantly increases** the risk of intimate partner violence due to power imbalances, economic dependency, and social isolation.
 - According to the UN, **1 in 5 young women worldwide (19%) were married in childhood in 2022.**
- **Implications of Intimate Partner Violence:**
 - **Increased likelihood of injuries**, depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, and [sexually transmitted infections](#).
 - Long-term physical and psychological impacts.
 - **Negative effects on educational achievement**, future relationships, and lifelong

prospects.

What are the Steps Needed to Empower Adolescent Girls?

- **WHO Recommendations and Interventions:**
 - **Strengthening support services** and early prevention measures tailored for adolescents.
 - **School-based programs** to educate both boys and girls on healthy relationships and violence prevention.
 - **Legal protections and economic empowerment** initiatives for women and girls.
 - Ensuring **secondary education** for all girls.
 - Securing **gender-equal property rights**.
 - **Ending harmful practices** such as **child marriage**.
 - **Supporting countries to measure and address violence** against women.
- **Other Steps Needed:**
 - **Access to Healthcare:** Ensure that **healthcare providers are trained to recognize** and respond to signs of intimate partner violence.
 - Provide **mental health services** and counselling for affected girls.
 - **Challenging Gender Norms:** Work to change societal norms and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality and violence against women and girls.
 - **Raise awareness in communities** about the signs and consequences of intimate partner violence and the importance of gender equality.
 - Ensure that girls and women have **equal property ownership and inheritance rights**.
 - **Continuous Monitoring:** Conduct **regular surveys and studies to monitor** the prevalence of intimate partner violence and the effectiveness of intervention programs.
 - **Use data to inform and develop policies** and programs aimed at reducing intimate partner violence.
 - **Global Efforts:** Collaborate with **international organizations like WHO** to share best practices and resources.
 - **Develop comprehensive national action plans** to address intimate partner violence, integrating health, education, and legal sectors.

Initiatives for Adolescent Girls in India

- [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao \(BBBP\)](#)
- [Mahila Shakti Kendra \(MSK\)](#)
- [Sukanya Samridhi Yojna \(SSY\)](#)
- [Nirbhaya Fund Framework](#)
- [One Stop Centres \(OSCs\)](#)
- [Constitution \(106th Amendment\) Act, 2023](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana \(PMMY\)](#)
- **Gender Budget** has been made a **part of the Union Budget of India** since 2005 and entails fund allocation towards programmes/schemes dedicated to women.
- The **Vigyan Jyoti programme** aims to **encourage girls to pursue higher education and careers in STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), especially in the areas where women's participation is low in order to balance the gender ratio across the streams.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the major challenges faced by adolescent girls in India. What steps can be taken to address these challenges effectively?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the world? (2017)

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) UN Human Rights Council
- (c) UN Women
- (d) World Health Organization

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q1. Distinguish between 'care economy' and 'monetized economy'. How can the care economy be brought into a monetized economy through women empowerment? **(2023)**

Q2. "Empowering women is the key to control population growth". Discuss. **(2019)**

Q3. Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India? **(2015)**

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