



## 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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