

It is important to grasp the meanings of some of the words associated with Gender Based Violence, regardless of the “image” they may have in different societies.

## **Key Terms**

**Conscious-raising**: a form of networking to raise political and social gender awareness. This concept was introduced in the 60s and 70s by feminist groups, who would meet weekly to discuss predetermined topics in order to become more aware of themselves and their status as women in society.

**Consent**: Acquiescence, or agreeing with a certain action or line of thought.

**Corrective Punishment**: Imposing an undesirable action on another, in efforts to make the victim correct his/her behavior in accordance with what the imposers of the act feel is correct.

**Deconstruction**: this refers to critically analyzing ideas or theories, in an effort to expose unquestioned assumptions and internal contradictions.

**Discrimination**: a pattern of (mis)treating a certain group of people on the basis of their association with that group, rather than as individuals of quality and merit.

**Empowerment**: refers to majorly to social and financial independence. Empowerment provides marginalized groups with opportunities for full privilege within a given community or society, eliminating any previous discrimination they may have faced.

**Exoticization/Eroticization**: the process of sexualizing a group and thus reducing it and its members to “the Other” category.

**Feminine**: refers to the stereotypical characteristics of, or befitting, female gender performance. The word feminine is also used to belittle a man, to describe a lack of masculine performance from a male-bodied person.

**Fluid**: the concept that gender, sexuality and identity are not fixed categories.

**Gender Identity**: refers to the sense of being a “female”, “male”, homosexual, bisexual or transgender.

**Gender Policing**: refers to tactics used by members of society to force individuals to conform to specific gender roles, whether by corrective punishment, social coercion or through physical/emotional means. Examples of such acts include: “*boys should not wear pink*”; “*women should act demure and lady-like*”. Rape is also sometimes used as a gender policing act (“*she was out late at night*”, “*she was wearing short clothes*”, etc).

**Gender Presentation**: refers to the presentation of a particular individual’s behavior or sense of dress, determined by their gender.

**Gender Roles/Norms**: behaviors considered appropriate by society, with regards to a particular gender(s). Example: “*boys don’t cry*”.

**Hyper-masculinity**: Exaggerated, stereotypical male behavior, which emphasizes physical strength, aggression, sexuality and/or violence. Such perceptions are usually enforced as a gender norm via the media; resulting in greater consent of condemnable acts. (For example. the “*boys will be boys*” syndrome, which makes it easier for perpetrators to get away unscathed.)

**“The Man”**: a vernacular term, used generally in regards to male dominance.

**Marginalize**: to give less importance to, or to treat with less respect and privilege, a certain group and its members in society.

**Misogyny**: discrimination, objectification and/or violence against women. Can also include fear or hatred of women.

**Objectification**: this takes place when a person is defined only by his/her sexual attributes, causing the rest of the person's attributes (personality, intellect, etc) to be ignored. Objectification is the reduction of another person to an object for one's gaze or pleasure.

**Patriarchy/Patriarchal**: a society or social structure which favors men at all levels, which is controlled by men or in which men have power.

**Patrilineal/Patrilocal**: tracing ancestry/descent/kinship from the paternal side of the family.

**"Penis Envy"**: this particular theory was formulated by Freud, to account for some aspects of female behavior. It refers to the envy felt by women of the male's possession of a penis, which gives him (in some societies) his status as a man, and thus their superior. While controversial among modern theorists, this particular theory can be seen in practical form amongst the *Bacha Posh* of Afghanistan and Peshawar.

**Repression**: in psychoanalysis, this refers to the burying of painful experiences, memories and/or desires.

**Sex versus Gender**: Sex refers to the anatomy of a person, which determines whether they are a male or female. Gender is psychological, being the social construction of an individual's sexuality and how that individual perceives him/herself.

**Sexual Assault**: this refers to any kind of sexual act in which a person is coerced or forced to engage against their will.

**Sexual Identity**: refers to the way an individual perceives him/herself. One's gender orientation can be straight, homosexual, bisexual or transsexual. Sexual identity is considered to be very fluid and not a rigid concept.

**Sex Typing**: treating a person differently because of his/her biological sex.

**Sexuality**: this refers to all the different aspects of human existence (biological, psychological and physiological) involving sexual experiences and expression.

**Stereotype**: a widely held belief regarding a particular group, which reduces the group or its members to that supposed trait.

**Gender Stereotype**: refers to a widely held belief regarding a gender, which determines how a particular individual is perceived. (Example: *women are the “weaker sex”*).

**Victim Blaming/Shaming**: when a victim is held at least partly responsible for causing the crime that befell them. This is also known as “rape-splaining”, taking from the word ‘explaining’, when such tactics are used to explain/belittle the crime of rape. (Example: “*she was dressed in short clothing so she was asking for it*” or “*just another drunk loose slut*”)

**“Womyn”**: a term adopted by some modern feminists, as a way of eliminating ‘man’ from the word ‘woman’. The argument is that the word ‘woman’ is a term that implies ‘not-man’, and should be discarded because women need to define themselves without reference to males.