

Gender Violence against Women in Social Networks

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Abstract

The main objective of this article is to analyze the collection of information through a systematic review, from the angle of gender violence against women in social networks. Under this approach, gender violence against women in social networks is part of a patriarchal culture that guides certain practices of a violent nature to continue to occur today, despite the context in which these women live, it is possible to demonstrate the help that they have received thanks to their incorporation into groups specialized in guiding them with their support in these problems or help from social movements such as feminism. This is how these perspectives are put into context, approaches that generate a better understanding of gender violence against women in social networks.

Keywords: Gender Violence, Violence Against Women, Social Networks, Cyberbullying, Sexual Violence.

1. Introduction

Gender violence has been negatively affecting society, becoming evident in all parts of the world until it has become a real problem. For this reason, the matter is cause for concern by world authorities and organizations that have recognized the problem in the field of health and development [1]. In this way, gender violence is recognized as any act, fact or action that threatens the physical and psychological integrity of a person or group of people based on their gender. Likewise, most of these acts of violence have been perpetrated against women. According to official reports, one in three women has been subjected to gender violence [2]. It should be noted that gender violence, in addition, includes all harmful behaviors and attitudes directed at people because of their sex, including non-consensual sexual behaviors, certain authoritarian behaviors and even any act of discrimination [3]. All this is also an obstacle to the development and well-being of women, since those who have been victims of gender violence have consequences on their physical, mental, and material health.

Likewise, with the new digital era, gender violence has spread in various social networks. Technological advances have allowed a global connection and at the same time a rapid development in the way of sharing important information by having freedom of expression and denouncing violations of human rights, however, they also provide fertile ground for

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new forms of gender-based violence against women that are growing at alarming rates and largely going unpunished. Social networks have become our second reality, making users within Twitter or Facebook have a list of contacts at their disposal, in addition, these social networks have been acquiring political and social importance [4]. There are many examples of women who work in politics and journalism who suffer from this cyber violence, they have even gone to court due to indiscriminate harassment [5]. This shows that digital tools facilitate the perpetration of harmful acts, often by partners and ex-partners, but also by strangers. Maintaining an environment in which violence against women seems to be normalized by society, it is likely that the prevalence of gender-based cyberviolence will continue to rise in the coming years, especially among young people. Facilitating that digital environments are not supportive of women, then limiting their use, to later abandon social networks completely, thus weakening the support networks in digital spaces giving the opportunity to glimpse two opposites such as awareness of violence against women and positions more deeply rooted in a thought that violates the rights of women [5]. In addition, with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, cases of violence against women have only increased. For this reason, it is important to recognize the new dynamics that violence against women implies within social networks.

In this way, it is recognized that social networks are a useful tool as a means of communication both personally and professionally, since it allows interaction with friends, family and people with common interests; however, despite the multiple benefits that the various websites offer us, social networks are also a means of exercising gender violence since many of the virtual platforms do not have filters that protect the women from being harassed, intimidated, psychologically violated, etc. Violence against women through social networks can cause the same or similar damage as other types of violence.

For this reason, this work of systematic review of the literature on gender violence against women in social networks has two objectives: (a) to make known the recent concepts and positions that are held on gender violence against women; and (b) to identify the dynamics in social networks on violence against women during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Method

2.1. Methodology

In order to meet the proposed objectives, a systematic review has been carried out based on the PRISMA statement [6], in order to transparently record the reason for the review, the procedure used, and the results obtained [7].

An initial search was carried out in the EBSCO, Scopus and Web of Science data-bases to identify previous systematic reviews, but none published or in process explicitly related to the concept of gender violence in social networks was found.

On the other hand, the search for documents in the databases was carried out in English, and the keywords used were gender violence, woman violence, female violence, gender abuse, woman abuse, female abuse, social media, social network, social platform, social site, social web, Facebook, and Twitter.

This was done through the following search equations: (gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social media", (gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social network ", (gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social platform", (gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social site", (gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social web" and (gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND (Facebook OR Twitter).

2.2. Search strategy

For the systematic review, the aforementioned databases were used, searching for articles that have been published in international scientific journals between 2020 and 2022.

This review is based on the research question: What is the evidence on gender violence against women through social networks during the pandemic period?

2.3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

In order to design criteria to include and exclude studies completely without errors, various criteria were used; the texts must have been published between 2020 and 2022, accessibility of obtaining the full text, discarding by repetition, documents in Spanish and English, of an empirical nature and focused on gender violence against women in social networks.

2.4. Study selection procedure

The final selection of the works followed several stages. A total of 76 works were identified: 31 articles in Scopus, 25 articles in WoS and 20 articles in EBSCO. All studies were manually filtered, and duplicate papers were removed (n=38). The result yielded a total of 38 texts to review.

Initially, the authors of this study independently reviewed the title, year, author-ship, and abstract in accordance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, in order to generate an adequate verification process. From the results found in the three data-bases, those papers that were not available in full text (n=7), those that did not have a version of the document in English or Spanish (n=4) and those that did not meet the requirements of focus on gender violence against women in social networks were excluded (n=9). The result of this last step yielded a total of 18 articles to be analyzed.

Subsequently, an independent review of the full text of these 18 papers was carried out, paying greater attention to ten criteria: (a) author; (b) year of publication; (c) objective; (d) method; (e) sample; (f) scope of research; (g) technique and instrument; (h) conclusions; and (i) language of publication. As a result of this review, the documents whose content did not comply with the inclusion criteria (n=2) were eliminated. The final result after the process generates a total of 16 articles for review and detailed reading.

2.5. Data analysis

In order to systematize the most important information from the selected studies, a matrix was used that compiles the ten criteria exposed in the previous section, which allowed a quantitative balance to be made.

3. Results

3.1. Identification of selected publications

To carry out the search, three databases were used and in which the search equations were applied, resulting in:

Table 1. Search results by database and query string.

query string	WoS	Scopus	Ebsco	Total
(gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social media"	19	29	16	64
(gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social network"	12	26	8	46
(gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social platform"	0	0	0	0

(gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social site"	0	0	0	0
(gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND "social web"	0	0	0	0
(gender OR wom* OR female) AND (violence OR abuse) AND (Facebook OR Twitter)	16	16	16	48
Total	47	71	40	158

Subsequently, the established inclusion-exclusion criteria were applied, resulting in:

Table 2. Number of articles selected according to inclusion-exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria	before	after
Ci-1	158	38
Ci-2	38	31
Ci-3	31	29
Ci-4	29	25
Ci-5	25	18
Exclusion criteria	before	after
Ce-1	18	16

The final sample of identified documents was organized according to the following criteria: author, year of publication, main objective, methodology, study population or sample, research site, instrument, conclusions, and language of publication. The following table presents a summary of the identified articles:

Table 3. Synthesis of articles published in databases from 2020 to April 2022.

N	Author and year	Type of study
1	Molnar and Hendry (2022)	Mixed
2	Watson (2022)	Mixed
3	Berggren and Gotzen (2022)	Qualitative
4	Um et al. (2021)	Quantitative
5	Soldevilla et al. (2021)	Quantitative
6	Kumar et al. (2021)	Mixed
7	Pilote and Hubner (2021)	Qualitative
8	Chaparro-Saenz and Galpin (2021)	Mixed
9	Erikson et al. (2021)	Mixed
10	Bali et al. (2021)	Mixed
11	Fuchs and Schäfer (2021)	Mixed
12	Perez (2021)	Mixed
13	Fairbairn (2020)	Mixed

14	Datiri (2020)	Mixed
15	Ogan and Bas (2020)	Qualitative
16	Krisvianti and Triastuti (2020)	Quantitative

3.2. Description of included publications

Sixteen articles had the inclusion-exclusion criteria proposed according to the established methodology. A greater number of publications was identified in the EBSCO (08), Scopus (07) and, to a lesser extent, Web of Science (03) databases. The writing publication language of the articles was English (14) and Spanish (02).

The investigations were carried out in Canada (02), Sweden (02), Peru (02), Africa, Australia, Colombia, South Korea, the United States, India, Indonesia, Japan, Arab countries, the United Kingdom, and Turkey, a study for each country. And most of the studies were carried out in the year 2021 (09), 2020 (04) and 2022 (03).

Based on the results obtained, it has been possible to find seven types of objectives based on the central theme that makes up their nature:

Objectives aimed at exploring the theoretical concepts of gender violence: One study sought to provide a comprehensive empirical understanding of its prevalence through the conceptualization of online gender-based abuse in three dimensions: frequency, character, and consequence [8]. Added to this, another investigation was oriented to understand the dynamics in social networks on violence against women through four central objectives such as understanding, a better understanding of the victims, development of terminology and the contribution of new theoretical knowledge [9]. On the other hand, other authors offered a theoretical discussion of male peer support [10].

Objectives aimed at exploring prevention strategies against violence against women: A study emphasizes the analysis of conversations with providers as a central axis in the work of preventing violence against women in social networks [11]. Other authors mention that it is necessary to provide peace and liberation strategies for women in the face of gender violence [12]. And finally, others propose to determine the use that young people give to social networks to prevent gender violence in the context of an Australian media campaign [13].

Objectives aimed at exploring activism in social networks against violence against women: two authors examine the way in which social media influence the struggle of indigenous women [14]. Similarly, a study looks at the ways in which women use Twitter as a means of protest against all types of gender-based violence and the impact on gender activism [15]. And finally, an author analyzes Facebook's reactions to two news reports that report police complaints about gender-based violence published in a national newspaper [16].

Objectives aimed at exploring the forms of violence against women: A study considers a priority the analysis of tweets about six acts of violence (physical, verbal, sexual, harassment, brutal murder, and blaming the victims) against women [17]. And another proposes to analyze in depth the new modalities that men have such as monitoring, restricting, harassing and intimidating feminists/social networks [18].

Objectives aimed at exploring the analysis of language data in social networks: A study reveals the use of a natural language processing model applied to classify content messages on gender violence in social networks [19]. In the same way, the elaboration of a standardization methodology for the elaboration of data analysis in natural language is proposed, in the study on gender violence evidenced in the social network [20]. And finally, researchers present an exploratory analysis using tools, computational linguistic methods and complemented by in-depth qualitative studies of the misogynistic discourses presented on Twitter [21].

Objectives aimed at exploring migration due to sexual violence: The path that exists from sexual violence prior to migration to the risk of suicide is analyzed, due to the absence of refugee women's networks [22].

Objectives aimed at exploring the impact of the permissive climate of social networks focuses on the broader impact that the permissive climate of social networks has perpetuated towards gender-based violence [23].

Regarding the methodological approach, 10 texts with a mixed approach, 03 with a qualitative approach and 03 with a quantitative approach were identified. Regarding the size of the study sample, it was identified that 10 mixed studies worked with samples of more than 931,363 and less than 4 cases. While those of a qualitative nature did so with samples of a greater than 14 and a less than 6 cases. On the other hand, in the quantitative studies they work with a sample of 85837 and less than 273 cases. Along the same lines, in general, of the 16 studies, 07 are from the social network Twitter, 02 are from Facebook, 02 are from Twitter and Facebook, 02 are from different social networks and one from Reddit and Twitter.

Regarding the use of research instruments, it was identified that the mixed studies used the analysis questionnaire technique [9, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21], the survey [18], the surveys and interviews [8], the interviews qualitative [11] and the sampling technique with questionnaire and interviews [23].

On the other hand, in the case of studies with a qualitative approach, the communication technique [17] called "garden hose" [24], the interview technique [10] and the virtual observation and interview techniques [14] were used.

And finally, in the case of studies with a quantitative approach, Bidirectional Encoder Representation from Transformers (BERT) [25] and surveys [19], self-administered surveys and interviews [22] and the visual ethnography technique [12] were used.

3.3. Gender and gender violence

After analyzing the literature, it has been possible to detect the definitions used within the texts chosen for the purpose and effect of conceptualizing the term gender. Like-wise, it is argued that the term gender endures within the social framework. It is proposed that the term gender is defined as an analytical and relational category that is created and maintained in social processes [26].

Gender-based violence is a serious violation of human rights, since it is stated that gender-based violence includes all kinds of harmful behaviors or actions of social feminist activism against people because of their sex, including psychological, physical, or sexual behaviors without consent, in addition to any form of discrimination [27], physical, psychological, sexual, economic and semiotic violence are also described as different types of violence experienced by women [28-30]. Likewise, violence against women and children was conceptualized as a crime against humanity [31].

Gender violence is of an unlimited nature, of a broad scope that transcends social classes and educational levels [32]. This occurs in different areas and all of them cause harm to the victim. Some of the forms of gender violence towards women are mentioned, being these physical, sexual, psychological, economic, verbal or written [33]. This type of violence is carried out by different subjects, including partners, co-workers, and even rivals in the political field. Likewise, reference is also made to the types of violence against women, arguing that intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women and includes physical, sexual, emotional abuse and control behaviors by an intimate partner [34].

One of the most frequent forms of violence against women is psychological within which abusive language occurs. It groups this type of violence as explicit and implicit forms of abusive language: Explicit abusive language is clearly derogatory, while its implicit forms

are hidden behind sarcasm and irony [35-36]. Likewise, it is affirmed that specific and violent language towards women is what is called misogyny, which consists of prejudice towards women due to the conception that women are weaker [37].

In addition, social networks also encouraged abusive language against women since some virtual platforms do not have filters against such behavior, thus giving rise to a new type of violence, cyberbullying. The literature exposes the idea that from the beginning of social networks, this consisted of forms alluding to gender violence, thereby preventing the shortcomings of executive laws for the prevention of online harassment [38].

The damage caused by gender violence is detrimental to all areas of the victim's life. The repercussions of gender violence are known and can directly affect all aspects of life: the mental and physical well-being of the person as well as social development [39].

3.4. Sexual violence against women

Sexual violence is all acts that imply sexual connotations. This is defined as any type of sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or insinuations, acts to traffic, or acts directed against sexual freedom using mechanisms of coercion by any person, regardless of their relationship with the victim, in any environment, be it the home or workplace [40].

On the other hand, sexual violence against women occurs in all social contexts. Even indigenous women are also victims of sexual violence which goes beyond just the gender context [41].

3.5. Social networks and daily life

Social networks have an impact on the health and behavior of the community, making health procedures precarious, inadequate, and ineffective with these already scarce resources, all aimed at a young audience [42]. These social networks are defined as mobile services that allow millions of users to connect to the network, making their day-to-day happen online [43], therefore in these virtual spaces, algorithms have been created to allow the search for connections, which has given many users topics for debate, since these practices condition the human being and make them addicted to these platforms [44]. And it was found that in the networks, there are virtual communities that are groups of people on the Internet, who create relationships within this space, making that in this process there are millions of online communities [45].

The partiality that we can appreciate within the cyber spaces has generated multiple opinions. There are those who think that these spaces are neutral or egalitarian when it comes to security in them, such as equality, unfortunately they continue to generate the exclusion of members [46].

It is important to highlight that the decolonization of technologies is also extremely important since these elements provide us with certain unique aspects of the human being, which make them define their own rationality, this implies new matters of justice, despite the fact that a certain domain persists [47].

Within the use of social networks as part of our own lifestyle, it is currently observed that certain routine activities can motivate future behaviors against the victims, which is the same as saying they are part of the victims of violence [48]. Some arguments expose that there are three factors that would make this a routine activity, the first would be having an accessible victim, the second is a highly encouraged thug and finally the lack of a guardian that will make violent situations possible [49-50].

Therefore, taking this to social networks, not everything is negative since these networks can be positive as long as they allow the establishment of friendly relations, this will make communication with others more assertive [21, 51]. On the other hand, unfortunately they exist by themselves within digital cultures, which will represent links that should already

be considered lost in this century, as is the case of patriarchy [52]. To argue further on this point, it is mentioned that by removing a reinforcement network from relations of some power, women continue to be marginalized within these social networks, thus producing a very negative effect [53].

3.6. Social networks, women, and gender violence

The reputation that women gain within social networks is diverse. Some authors state that this construction process must be particularly important for women, because it will allow them to break with stereotypes, violence, and others [54].

The use of the notion of the effect of relationships in networks as sources of support has been observed in the selected texts. In addition, it is argued that the use of social networks constitutes a means of communication that allows a better approximation between law enforcement officers and citizens. The following theoretical approaches are presented below:

- Relationships in social networks as a source of support: The sources of support are closely related to the number of relationships that one has in social networks as possible help from the various sources.
- Wide range of network relationships: It is argued that people may have more access to a variety of support and diverse sources of information when they are within a wide range of network relationships [55].
- Less range of network relationships: It is argued that having a less diverse network and fewer kinship ties in women's networks made them more likely to commit suicide [56].
- Social networks as a means of communication: states that the police use social networks as a mechanism to communicate with the public [57].

3.7. Activism, feminism and social networks

The notions that exist around feminist activism in social networks have been identified in the selected texts. They maintain that feminist activism in social networks proposes a reciprocal relationship of both for the transformation of militant feminist practices in social networks, therefore this concept allows us to reconsider the women's movement based on its heterogeneity and the plurality of social fields through which they move in institutions, associations, and universities [58-59]. These come in three ways:

- Liberal Feminism and Social Media: Liberal feminism attempts to harness liberal values of justice, equality, and equity to fight for women's rights within the patriarchal state system. In addition, it is stated that the feminist approach establishes a rejection of the argument that technological developments had positive results for women, this because social institutions are dominated by men.
- African feminism: argues that feminist theory is entering the female experience of the continent, in which they pose a series of problems. These include lack of access to education, female genital mutilation, early marriage, domestic abuse, and the risk of death, just as the nature of African feminism in essence, it is a philosophical feminism, academic in nature, of experimental and practical type [60-62].
- Intersectional feminism: it states that gender-based systems come together with other systems of subordination such as race, age, disability, social class, or place of residence for the purpose and effect of multiple discrimination, for which reason the gender violence is suffered by women differently depending on the convergence of different systems of oppression [63].

Likewise, it has been possible to show that, in the different selected texts, formal conceptual definitions are used to understand what the critical analysis of feminist discourse is. Next, the theoretical positions for its understanding derived from the bibliographic review process carried out are presented:

- Critical analysis focused on social issues: it asserts that it is focused on social problems and the role that discourses play in producing and reproducing powers of domination. Attached to oppressed groups and people who disagree with those who exercise their dominance through texts [64].
- Critical analysis focused on the practices of masculine privilege: it states that it is the study of the discursive practices that sustain the social schemes by which men are privileged while women are continuously harmed, excluded, and ignored [65-67].
- Critical analysis focused on the mass media: it includes the mode of production and reproduction of representations and gender identities through the media, legitimizing their inequality [65].

4. Discussion and conclusions

Regarding the concept of gender, the review has allowed us to see the lack of definition of “gender” without relating it to violence. Therefore, for the theoretical approach it is necessary to develop a double entry from theories on gender violence [27-32, 34] and women's social networks [42-43].

Following this same perspective, the possibility of using the theoretical concepts of virtual community, bias in social networks, decolonization of technology, use of social networks as a lifestyle and reputation of women in social networks opens up. The concept of virtual community would allow a more detailed look at the participation and discussion involving the users of the emerging groups on the Internet [45]. In the same way, the concept of bias in social networks would allow a better understanding of how social networks are far from being neutral in terms of the participation of socially excluded members [46]. In the same way, the approach to the decolonization of technologies would allow a more detailed look at how these elements have aspects of human expression [47].

Likewise, the theory of the routine activity of the cyber lifestyle would allow a better understanding of how direct interactions between individuals can motivate harmful behaviors [48]. Similarly, understanding factors such as the existence of an accessible victim, an incentivized offender, and the lack of a guardian would enable transgression between individuals [49-50]. In addition, reprimanding the reputation of women in social networks would allow a better understanding of how the processes of building a reputation in social networks are crucially important for a woman [54].

And, regarding support networks for women victims of gender violence, it is necessary to lay the foundations on how a greater range of contacts in networks would allow support from various sources and on the contrary [55]: a smaller range of networks would show less support from various sources [56]. These theories will serve to understand the impact of having contacts within social networks.

Regarding feminist activism in social networks, the theory [59] indicated that it would allow a better understanding of how the reciprocity between feminist activism and social networks would allow the transformation of feminist practices. In addition, theories on liberal feminism and social networks were identified, which would allow a better understanding of the importance of justice and equality in various sectors for women, since according to liberal feminism, equality between the two sexes has not been achieved much less they have had positive results in the fight for women's rights.

On the other hand, the theories on African feminism [60-62] will make it possible to understand the philosophy of that continent, which is fundamentally of an academic, experimental and practical nature. It was identified that the approach on intersectional feminism [63] would help to have a better understanding of the complexity of the critical analysis of feminist discourse and therefore the theoretical approaches that focus on social issues [64], making it possible to understand their role in the problems of a social nature,

as well as the theory centered on the practices of masculine privilege [65-67] that allows a better understanding of the discourses as support for the scheme of privileges towards men. Regarding the media, discourse theory [65] will enable a better understanding of how communication networks in their mode of production delegitimize gender representations.

Regarding support among male peers, it is necessary to resort to the theoretical bases on the role of men [68] that will help to understand how violence against women is caused by patriarchy.

And, regarding the culture of masculinity in politics, the theoretical proposals presented [45, 69-70] would help to understand how politics is a sector dominated by men permeated by a culture of masculinity.

From the review of the literature, it is identified that for the description and analysis of gender violence against women in social networks, the mixed approach is the most appropriate. Similarly, regarding the size of the study sample, a large number of cases can be used up to a smaller number of cases depending on the purpose of the study. And, in terms of social networks, it has been verified that the most popular social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have been used, but Reddit and other social networks have been used to a lesser extent.

Regarding the most suitable research instruments, it has been observed that for research studies with a mixed approach, the use of interviews and surveys prevails. Likewise, the use of analysis questionnaires has been observed.

Similarly, for studies with a qualitative approach, the use of interviews is a priority. In addition, techniques such as the "garden hose" [24] and virtual observation have been used.

In the same way, in studies with a quantitative approach, the use of surveys is a priority. Additionally, techniques such as Bidirectional Encoder Representation from Transformers (BERT) [19, 25] and visual ethnography have been used.

The systematic review on gender violence against women in social networks has allowed us to glimpse the diversity of theoretical positions on the subject.

In this sense, this article has taken into account these theories with which it seeks to explain the violence exerted against women in all aspects of their life, both sentimental and professional. In addition to this, the factors that cause this violence differ from each other, according to the relevance they attribute to different conditioning factors of a psychological nature, relationships, social and cultural factors. For this reason, it can be affirmed that some forms of violence exerted against women are physical, sexual, economic, and psychological, which allows us to understand that these conditioning factors are usually determining factors when exercising violence. And, that this violence is transferred to digital platforms, where the demonstrations are similar to those that take place outside these social networks, making use of new tools and ways to attack women.

It is explained in detail that social networks are composed of modalities differentiated by gender, which allows visualizing certain regulatory deficiencies in the prevention of online harassment.

The repercussion of gender violence has caused irreparable damage to the lives of women, specifically when talking about sexual violence, where any act with sexual connotations can be defined, thereby cutting off the freedom of women, seeing her-self subjected later.

Along the same lines, this article observes the problem of gender violence in different spheres such as the political sphere, where the reality of the political sphere is dominated by men, within which women are reduced to marginal treatment due to the existence of a patriarchal social system, present at a global level [45, 69-70]. Meanwhile, the feminist agenda is no stranger to this problem of gender violence against women in social networks,

proposing solution measures and dialogue in order to create a bridge between women and the institutions to empower them.

In addition, the main limitation of our research is the lack of up-to-date basic concepts on gender and the difficulty of finding reviews that are based on systematic gender violence outside the professional field, since most authors only relate it to their research topic.

Finally, a study from a less analytical and more practical point of view is pertinent in terms of developing solutions that are close to reality and effective for all types of societies in which violence against women occurs, in addition to prioritizing the prevention of practices that violate the physical and psychological integrity of women using education as the primary basis to achieve this objective.

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