

Effect of Dispute resolution on Sexual and gender-based violence

Headline finding: Conflict resolution interventions were moderately promising in resolving sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through fostering dialogue, accountability, and survivor support.

Geographical distribution: Sub saharan Africa and Yugoslavia

Effect: Moderate(evidence suggest that though community based programs helped reducing SGBV, justice was often denied by weak legal systems and survivors often faced stigma and trauma.

Confidence in study findings: High and medium confidence

Short Summary

Such disputes are legitimized as resulting from dispute resolution because the intervention would include an opportunity to provide restorative justice, to engage the community and prevent similar incidents. While dialogue and cultural sensitivity provide potential avenues in dispute resolution towards reducing instances of SGBV, offering support to the survivors and building stronger, safer communities, the effect remains sensitive to their design, the means and manner in which they were implemented and continuously evaluated, ensuring these interventions meet specific survivor needs rather than inadvertently causing additional risks.

Long summary

The intervention

Here the intervention is Dispute resolution which aims to address conflicts and grievances, potentially including issues related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is increasingly recognized as a critical issue in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian settings, where traditional justice systems often fail to address the needs of survivors and hold perpetrators accountable. Dispute resolution, particularly community-based and restorative justice approaches, offers a promising intervention to address SGBV as an outcome by fostering dialogue, mutual understanding, and accountability.

How is the intervention expected to work

These processes are anticipated to work by offering a structured, neutral platform to settle disputes and reduce tension that does not escalate into violence. With SGBV, for example, dispute resolution may serve as a channel for addressing grievances, justice, and finding peaceful solutions that can last in communities. Adding restorative justice practices, community involvement, and dialogue can enable dispute resolution to rebuild relationships, punish the offenders, and bring back confidence among members of a community.

The evidence base

The summary cell consists of one systematic review that sought to survey the range and effect of efforts to decrease incidence, risk and harm from sexual violence in conflict, post-conflict and other humanitarian crises, in low and middle income countries. Twenty three bibliographic databases and 26 websites were searched, covering publications between 1990 and September 2011 using database-specific keywords for sexual violence and conflict or humanitarian crisis.

The review evidence

The studies reviewed showed that SGBV in conflict settings was not random but often used as a tactic to intimidate and destabilize communities. This left lasting physical and psychological harm, making recovery and peacebuilding much harder after conflict ended. Survivors of SGBV often dealt with stigma, emotional trauma, and displacement, which isolated them from their communities and limited their ability to take part in reconciliation or rebuilding efforts. Efforts to bring justice for survivors were often blocked by weak legal systems, lack of political commitment, and widespread impunity for perpetrators. This not only denied justice but also allowed cycles of violence to continue. The review did not mention any effect size therefore, the data is narratively synthesized.

Some studies showed that programs focused on community-based healing, gender equality, and survivor protection helped reduce violence and support long-term peace. These interventions gave survivors a voice and promoted their recovery and empowerment. The review emphasized that addressing mental health needs and improving legal accountability were critical steps toward sustainable peace in post-conflict societies.

Confidence Assessment: High and medium confidence

Effect: **Source: Spangaro (2013)**