

*Research Report on Women Abuse**By GUAN JIE XUE*

For all of history, women have been treated as if they were politically and socially inferior; and the properties of the men they married. As a matter of fact, the unjustifiable restrictions on women, with regard to legal rights and freedoms, have only been lifted in the last few decades. However, despite numerous successes in empowering women, certain issues in terms of women abuse still exist in all areas of our life. Owing to the fact that violence against women was not considered an issue worthy of international attention, victims of violence were forced to suffer in silence with little public recognition of their plight. Nonetheless, this situation began to change in the 1920s as women's groups organized locally and internationally to demand attention to the physical, psychological, and economic abuse of women. As a result, violence against women has gradually come to be recognized as a legitimate human rights issue and as a significant threat to women's health and well-being.

Women abuse refers to various forms of violence, mistreatment and neglect, which women particularly experience in their intimate and dependent relationships. In a typical abusive relationship, the abuser frequently maintains the control of his partner's actions by physically, sexually, and psychologically abusing her. The devastating impact of abuse can create wide ranging and long lasting physical, emotional scars in victim's lifetime. For instance, being abused may undermine virtually every aspect of a woman's life, including her ability to work and her relationships with children. In some cases, women are eventually killed by their abusive partners. This crucial issue occurs in all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, any woman may experience abuse, regardless of her age, race and religion. Therefore, it is a severe human rights violation that affects women worldwide. It has been estimated that one in four Canadian women will be assaulted in their lifetime. From the bedroom to the battlefield, from the schoolyard to the work place, women and girls are at risk from rape and other forms of sexual violence. Women's options for obtaining support and ending the abuse are frequently limited by her personal and social circumstances. First Nations women, refugee women, and women with disabilities

experiences of discrimination, racism and poverty create additional barriers. These women often must deal not only with the consequences of being abused but also with the effects of their marginalized position in society, and the reality of limited services. The response of governments to rape and other forms of sexual violence is still inadequate. Sexual violence against women is exacerbated by the inadequate implementation of laws. Victims and survivors of sexual violence must have full access to adequate and effective legal redress and to health information, aid, protection and services.

Shelternet is Canada's first and only national online resource and support network for abused women and their children. It is a vibrant NGO committed to decreasing barriers and supporting shelters to meet the needs of abused women and their children. Since its inception ten years ago, the organization has helped thousands of women across the countries who are victims of domestic violence. Shelternet is dedicated to decreasing the barriers faced by women accessing help online, increasing the technological capacity of shelters for abused women and their children, and facilitating a multi-sectorial response to violence against women and their children. •The province of Ontario has launched its Sexual Violence Action Plan to both prevent sexual violence and improve supports for survivors since 2004. The plan includes programs designed to prevent sexual violence through increased public education, including initiatives that reflect the diversity of communities across the province.

Canadian government should strengthen the criminal justice system's response toward sexual violence, including increasing coordination and training for police, crown counsel and other justice personnel. Moreover, the government should push the implementation of existing laws that guarantee access to justice and services for women subjected to violence including rape and other forms of sexual violence. In addition, the government should pressure foreign countries to put an end to laws that discriminate against women and call for new laws to be enacted that will protect women's human rights.

Violence against women is a violation of human rights, sometimes deadly and always unacceptable. It cuts across the boundaries of culture, race, class, geography and religion. There is no region of the world, no country and no culture in which women live free from violence. It is a complex

and persistent problem with multiple causes. The overall impact of such violence is incalculable, as it not only directly affects individual victims but also their families and children. Moreover, it is not only a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women; it is a mechanism for perpetuating inequality. The elimination of such violence has become an obligation of all governments. So, let's unite together and say no to violence against women!