



Attitudes of Secondary and High School Students on Domestic Violence Against Women

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE PROVINCES OF ANKARA, ERZURUM AND AYDIN



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Prologue

Survey on the Attitudes of Secondary and High School Students on Domestic Violence Against Women is a study carried out by the Population Association with the support of the United Nations Population Fund.

The Population Association was established in 2004 for the purpose of carrying out studies on population sciences, participating in and supporting population studies carried out in various disciplines, contributing to dissemination of information produced through population studies, and ensuring professional solidarity, communication, cooperation and interaction among those working on demographics and population-related matters.

The Population Association has set up a core team from among its members for the execution of this Project, and the team carried out the project works under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Hilal Özcebe. In the survey conducted in secondary (middle) and high schools in the provinces of Ankara, Aydın and Erzurum, interviews were made with male and female students, school administrators, and psychological counselling and guidance teachers (school counsellors). In the survey carried out using the qualitative method, information was collected on i) the views of adolescents on family structure, gender and domestic violence against women, ii) the views of school administrators and psychological counselling and guidance teachers on domestic violence against women, and their experiences with students experiencing domestic violence against women in their families, and iii) the views and suggestions of students, teachers and school administrators on what should be done to prevent domestic violence against women.

We would like to extend our thanks to the United Nations Population Fund for choosing the Population Association to work with in such an important Project for Turkey, and to Meltem Ağduk and Duygu Arıç, who helped us in various stages of the Project.

On behalf of the Population Association, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Hilal Özcebe, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sutay Yavuz and Hacer Taşcene, who made tremendous contributions to the Project, and to all interviewers who joined the field works of the project.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Provincial Governorates, Provincial Education Directorates, School Administrators and Teachers who gave us their support during the field works, and to all students who voluntarily participated in the interviews.

We hope that the results obtained in this survey will contribute to the efforts of public agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and volunteers working on preventing domestic violence against women in our country.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sinan TÜRKYILMAZ
Chairman, Population Association (Turkey)





Foreword

Around the world, women and girls are victims of countless acts of violence. The range of gender-based violence is devastatingly endless, occurring quite literally from womb to tomb. Violence against women and girls occurs in every segment of society – regardless of class, ethnicity, culture, or country.

While you are reading this text, many millions of women around the world will experience the trauma of violence and abuse. It is estimated that 1 in 3 women throughout the world suffer this violence during her lifetime. The same figure for EU countries is 1 in 5. Women in Turkey face violence like women in many other countries; the latest survey shows that 2 in 5 women have been exposed to physical violence. In the same research, 42 percent of women have been exposed to physical and sexual violence, and 44 percent of women have been exposed to emotional violence or abuse. All of these were caused by their husbands or partners.

Over the past 30 years, increasingly gender-based violence has been recognized both in Turkey and worldwide. One of the newest and most comprehensive international instruments to combat violence against women is “Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)” which was built on the 4P principle of ‘Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Policy’. For many years all the interventions to combat VAW have been mostly built around the protection and prosecution. However policy development and prevention are the weakest links of the combating interventions. Among the prevention interventions the most excluded groups have been the youth and children. As it is indicated in some research, children and the youth are the two groups who have been the silent victims of violence within the family even they are not the subject of direct violence. However it is also known that violence is an act that is learnt and to prevent violence against women, the interventions should be started in the early childhood.

Increased rates of violence worldwide have heightened the need to understand what children think about their experiences as victims or witnesses of violence. Much has been written about children and violence, but less has been written from the viewpoint of the children themselves. Without knowing their experience and perception it is impossible to develop any intervention to prevent violence against women regarding to early ages of youth.

This research which is the first in its area had been conducted to understand the perception of school age youth (ages between 11-17) on violence against women and gender inequality which is the root cause of the act. Upon the results of this research UNFPA with the relevant partners will develop prevention interventions for the school age children.

As UNFPA we would like to thank to the researchers, Prof. Dr. Hilal Özcebe, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sinan Türkyılmaz, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sutay Yavuz and Hacer Taşçene and the interview team for conducting this



special qualitative research. We would also convey our gratitude to all the government officials, school principals and teachers who supported us in Ankara, Aydın and Erzurum.

Zahidul A. Huque

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1. Introduction

In recent years, violence was declared as a significant public health problem throughout the world. Although there are several definitions, one of the most popular is that of the World Health Organization (WHO):

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.¹

Violence can be classified in various ways with the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Within the scope of this classification, there are three different definitions of violence: self-inflicted, interpersonal and inter-factional. Self-inflicted violence involves suicide, attempted suicide and willful injury. Interpersonal violence covers, in particular, domestic violence against children, the spouse and the elder members of the family as well as violence by a family member or an outsider. Inter-factional violence involves social, political and economic acts of violence (Krug, 2002).

Another classification of violence involves its forms of application. Causing physical injury or sickness is referred to as 'physical violence'; involuntary sexual acts and forcing sexual intercourse is referred to as 'sexual violence'; lowering or attempting to weaken victims' self-respect is referred to as 'psychological violence'; and making or trying to make the victim economically dependent on the perpetrator is referred to as 'economic violence' (Krug, 2002).

Violence causes physical, psychological and behavioural problems and may result in physical injury or death. All types of violence generate adverse effects on physical, psychological and social well-being – in short, on the health of all the parties, starting with the victim. For all these reasons, violence is a major public health problem; it may be defined as a psychological and social problem that affects the well-being of individuals.

Violence emerges from the simultaneous influence of individual, relational, social, cultural and environmental factors; it is a result of the interaction between psycho-biological factors and the external environment. WHO defines risk factors for violence under four categories – individual, relationship, community and societal, some of which are related to the causes of violence, provided below (Krug, 2002):

- *Individual factors* may be basically defined as biological, psychological and behavioural characteristics. Biological factors include age, gender, genetic structure and neurological damages due to birth traumas. Psychological and behavioural qualities include hyperactivity, lack of behavioural control and attention deficit.
- *The environment and the individual's relationships with his/her family and friends* may also influence the emergence of violent behaviour. It is acknowledged that adults with

¹ See www.who.int/topics/violence/en/



childhood experiences of violence tend to engage more in violent behaviour than the perpetrators who do not have such childhood experience. The socio-economical level of the family as well as its cultural pattern also influence violent behaviour. Factors such as the consumption of alcohol and drugs, stress and social isolation increase violent behaviour.

- *Social factors* are drivers that can create environments involving weapons, gangs. Society's attitude towards risk-taking behaviour affects relationships and personal behaviour, thereby causing violent behaviour.
- The social structure of society involves basic concepts including the demographic structure and its transformation, socio-economic inequality, cultural values, policies regarding children and family.
- child and family policies, the existence of protective healthcare services, the existence and efficiency of the social assistance system, and the justice system.

The family is one of the environments where violence is observed the most. Domestic violence against women is an important public healthcare problem, which was recently included on the agenda of several countries. In 1993, the United Nations adopted the "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women". In this Declaration, violence against women is defined as "any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations, 1993). The United Nations refers to "violence occurring in private life, usually between family members who are related through sexual relation or blood relation" as domestic violence (General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2008).

In accordance with the results of the "Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey" survey conducted by Hacettepe University's Population Studies Institute and the General Directorate on the Status of Women in 2008, 39 per cent of the women who were married or who were in a relationship stated that they had become subject to physical violence by their partners in a certain period of their lives; almost half (46%) of women who stated that they were victims of violence said that they were victim of hitting, kicking, strangling, and/or knife or gun attacks. The survey revealed that one out of ten women had become victim to physical violence during pregnancy. In addition to physical violence, 15 per cent of married women stated that they had been subjected to sexual violence in a certain period of their lives: 24 per cent of the women who were victim of violence stated that they were injured as a result of physical or sexual violence; 33 per cent that they thought of committing suicide; and 12 per cent that they had attempted suicide (General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2009).

The scope of this survey also investigated men's tendency to wish to take control of women's lives. Women's views regarding men were as follows: 69 per cent stated that "men wanted always to know the whereabouts of women"; 44 per cent that "men got angry at seeing their partner talking to other men"; 35 per cent that "men intervene with their partners' clothing"; 31 per cent that "they could not go to health institutions without getting permission from their partners"; 15 per cent that "they were



disregarded and neglected by their partners”, 12 per cent stated that “their partners kept them from seeing their friends”, 9 per cent stated that “their partners kept them from seeing their family and friends”, and 4 per cent stated that “they suspected that their partners were cheating on them” (General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2009, p. 57).

In the Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey Survey, women’s relationships with men and certain approaches regarding their roles as women were examined: 49 per cent of the women believed that “women should not argue with their partners”, 48 per cent that “men are responsible for the behaviour of women”, 35 per cent that “children may be beaten in certain situations”; 31 per cent that “women should perform sexual intercourse with their partners even if they do not want to”, and 14 per cent that “men have the right to beat their partners in certain situations”. In addition, 34 per cent objected to the statement that “women can spend their money as they like” and 33 per cent objected to the statement that “men should also do housework” (General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2009).

Naturally, women’s physical and mental health is adversely affected by domestic violence to a significant extent. Problems related to the psychological state of the perpetrator of violence also cause a negative environment within the family. Furthermore, children are also negatively affected by this situation. Children of mothers who are victims of violence become ill-tempered and frequently cry (59 per cent), become introverted (56 per cent), become aggressive towards their mother and other children (38 per cent), have frequent nightmares (33 per cent) and wet their beds (28 per cent), compared to 36 per cent, 43 per cent, 20 per cent, 20 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, for children of mothers who were not victim of violence (General Directorate on the Level of Women, 2009).

In addition to the negative impact from living in a violent family environment on the children’s social and mental health during childhood, there is also a negatively impact on the child’s health throughout the child’s life. It is acknowledged that children growing up in a family where there is violence during their childhood are inclined to display acts of violence in their adulthood. How children perceive gender and violence that causes violent behaviour against women determines their future behaviour. In order to prevent them from developing violent behaviour as adults, it is necessary to evaluate their perceptions of ‘gender’, ‘violence’ and ‘domestic violence against women’. The primary aim of this report is to evaluate this perception and provide concrete recommendations for the prevention of violence.

Rationale of the Survey

In Turkey as well as in other countries, domestic violence against women has adverse effects on family health and peace. In order to be able to prevent domestic violence against women, the objective should be changing the perception of violence and promoting positive behaviour by individuals. Thus, it is very important to learn the perceptions on domestic violence by children and adolescents, the future generation, in order to be able to determine new intervention methods.





2. Objectives

1. To learn about the opinions of adolescents on the family structure, gender and domestic violence against women.
2. To learn about the opinions of school administrators and psychological counselling and guidance instructors on domestic violence against women and their experiences with students dealing with domestic violence against women in their families.

It is expected that the results of this survey will be used as a database for planned interventions for ensuring that children will have a positive outlook on their future relationships.





3. Method

In this survey, “Domestic Violence against Women: Attitudes of Secondary and High School students in the Provinces of Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın”, qualitative research methods of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used. Within the scope of the survey, focus group discussions were separately held with female and male groups from secondary school and high school students, and in-depth interviews were conducted with psychological counselling and guidance instructors and school administrators.

The survey population included students from public secondary schools and public high schools, and public Anatolian high schools from the city centres of Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın Provinces. These provinces were selected on the basis of the data from the 2009 *Report on Domestic Violence Against Women* by the General Directorate on the Status of Women. According to the results of this report, domestic violence against women is most intensely observed in the provinces of northeastern Anatolia and least intensely in the provinces in western Turkey. In line with these data, Erzurum was selected as a province from the northeastern Anatolia, Aydın from among the western provinces, and Ankara as a western Anatolia province, which is a metropolis and incorporates an average level of domestic violence against women.

In all of the three provinces, public secondary schools, public high schools and public Anatolian high schools were included in the survey; private schools were excluded. With the assistance from the provincial directorates of national education, the schools at the low, middle and high socio-economic levels in terms of student profiles were selected in the survey provinces. Two primary schools for the survey as well as a ‘spare’ school (i.e. another school to be used as a replacement school in case one school drops out of the survey) were selected from these socio-economic levels from among both secondary and high schools in all the three provinces to conduct the interviews within the scope of the survey.

The numbers of schools that have the support from provincial directorates of national education in each of the provinces are as follows:

- two secondary schools² with students from the low socio-economic level (+1 spare);
- two secondary schools with students from the middle socio-economic level (+1 spare);
- two secondary schools with students from the high socio-economic level (+1 spare);
- two high schools with students from the low socio-economic level (+1 spare);
- two high schools with students from the middle socio-economic level (+1 spare);
- two high schools with students from the high socio-economic level (+1 spare).

2 While conducting this survey, the secondary school corresponds to 6th/7th and 8th grade, whereas high school corresponds to the 9th/10th, 11th and 12th grades.



Sampling for Focus Group Discussions

Classes from four different grades were selected (two secondary and two high school) from the three socio-economic levels from each province. Thus, a total of 36 focus group discussions were carried out. The level and the grade of the class to be selected from each province were determined in line with the sampling tables presented below.

Focus group discussions were conducted with only one class from each of the selected schools. The class grade was determined according to the sampling tables – Tables 1, 2 and 3, prepared by each respective province. In selecting the class, the Section B, i.e. the second in line in the list of classes of each school, was used for the survey. Eight students of the same gender were chosen from the selected class to conduct the discussions. Whether to select male or female students from a given class was determined in accordance with the sampling table prepared in advance. The section and the students to be interviewed were determined in advance for a neutral and standard selection.

The eight students for the focus group were the last eight students on the student list of any given class. If any of these students were absent from school on the day that the survey was conducted, for whatever reason, or unwilling to participate in the survey, the next on the list of the same class was selected. Discussions were carried out if there were at least six students with the established gender in a given class. If there were less than six students of the established gender, field personnel were contacted and the same procedure was held for the A section in order to ensure at least six student respondents in the discussion.

Table 1: The sampling for the focus group discussions with students in Ankara Province

Interview Method	Low Socio-Economic Level		Middle Socio-Economic Level		High Socio-Economic Level	
Focus Group	1st Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section M	3rd Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section F	5th Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section M
	2nd Selected Secondary School	7th Grade Section F	4th Selected Secondary School	8th Grade Section M	6th Selected Secondary School	7th Grade Section F
	1st Selected High School	2nd Grade Section F	3rd Selected High School	1st Grade Section F	5th Selected High School	2nd Grade Section M
	2nd Selected High School	3rd Grade Section M	4th Selected High School	4th Grade Section M	6th Selected High School	3rd Grade Section F



Table 2: The sampling for the focus group discussions with students In Erzurum Province

Interview Method	Low Socio-Economic Level		Middle Socio-Economic Level		High Socio-Economic Level	
Focus Group	1st Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section M	3rd Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section M	5th Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section F
	2nd Selected Secondary School	7th Grade Section F	4th Selected Secondary School	8th Grade Section F	6th Selected Secondary School	8th Grade Section M
	1st Selected High School	1st Grade Section M	3rd Selected High School	2nd Grade Section F	5th Selected High School	2nd Grade Section F
	2nd Selected High School	3rd Grade Section F	4th Selected High School	4th Grade Section M	6th Selected High School	4th Grade Section M

Table 3: The sampling for the focus group discussions with students in Aydin Province

Interview Method	Low Socio-Economic Level		Middle Socio-Economic Level		High Socio-Economic Level	
Focus Group	1st Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section F	3rd Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section M	5th Selected Secondary School	6th Grade Section M
	2nd Selected Secondary School	7th Grade Section F	4th Selected Secondary School	8th Grade Section M	6th Selected Secondary School	7th Grade Section F
	1st Selected High School	1st Grade Section M	3rd Selected High School	1st Grade Section F	5th Selected High School	2nd Grade Section F
	2nd Selected High School	3rd Grade Section M	4th Selected High School	3rd Grade Section F	6th Selected High School	4th Grade Section M



Interviews with School Principal and Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructors

In schools where the survey has been conducted, in-depth interviews with one administrator and one psychological counselling and guidance instructor were also held. In schools with no psychological counselling and guidance instructors, interviews were held with class teachers. While focus group discussions were held in order to learn of their perceptions and understanding of domestic violence against women and violence in general, it was considered important to seek the opinions and suggestions of administrators and teachers as individuals who work on a one-to-one basis with this age group.

The school principal was interviewed, if available, and if not, one of the available and willing deputy principals was interviewed. In selecting the school principals or their deputies, criteria such as years of experience in the profession and period of service at the relevant school were considered.

In-depth interviews were held with psychological counselling and guidance instructors in the same schools. If there were no psychological counselling and guidance instructor at a given school, then the interview was held with the classroom/guidance teacher. With regard to the selection of the teachers to be interviewed, preference was given to classroom/guidance teachers experienced in elementary school education, and the teachers of the classes included in the survey.

Data Collection Material

Following the preliminary study conducted by the survey team, four questionnaires were developed for use during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions: The School Principal Questionnaire (Annex 1), Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructors/Teachers Questionnaire (Annex 2), the Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire for secondary school students (6th -8th grade) (Annex 3) and the Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire for high school students (9th–12th grade)(Annex 4).

During the focus group discussions, discussions concerned the questionnaire developed in the form of a story for the secondary school students (Annex 3). When narrating the story, the name of the child in the story was "Aylin" for the female student groups and "Alp" for male student groups. This allowed them to listen to a story about their peers and to elicit empathy.

Another semi-structured questionnaire was developed to be used with the high school groups (Annex 4). The questionnaires were developed for the survey through a preliminary testing in Ankara prior to the field work. The survey method and other relevant issues were examined, and then the actual data collection process began.

Data Collection Method

Since the data collection method is qualitative, it was ensured that data were collected by social sciences graduates, who are experienced and trained in this field and in qualitative data collection. Personnel for



the field work were selected by the survey professionals and received training; they were informed on the project and the data collection materials to be used on the field through a participative training programme.

At the data collection stage, two survey professionals participated in both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions held on the field. While one of the survey professionals led the interview or the discussion, the second survey professional took note of any gestures, attitudes or expressions that attracted attention, as well as the conversation topics. The discussions and interviews were also recorded with the permission of the respondents, and these recordings were subsequently deciphered and utilized upon the reporting stage.

Field Work

The field work consisted of two sub-stages: preliminary field work and the field survey.

a. Preliminary Testing

In order to ensure that the questionnaires prepared in accordance with the objective of the survey by the survey team would serve their purpose, preliminary testing was carried out in Ankara. Its main aim was to determine whether the questions on the questionnaire would be adequately understood by the respondents and to make the required modifications prior to the actual survey. To this end, a secondary school and a high school recommended by the Provincial Directorate for National Education of Ankara were visited.

Prior to the field work, the field workers underwent preliminary testing, thus ensuring that they would become master the questionnaires.

During the preliminary testing, all the questionnaires prepared for the interviews and discussions were administered. Each questionnaire was administered at least twice: focus group discussions were held four times – twice with female students and twice with male students. During these discussions, the survey professionals took note of problematic questions. Following the completion of the preliminary testing, the field professionals and the project team held a meeting to discuss whether the questionnaires were effective. The required modifications were made on the questionnaires in line with the received feedback and suggestions, and the questionnaires to be used as data collection materials on the field were finalized.

b. Field Survey

The field survey was conducted in Ankara, Aydın and Erzurum Provinces from February to April in 2012. Schools matching the samples in terms of socio-economic levels were identified with the assistance of the Provincial Directorate of National Education in each province. The administrators of these schools



were contacted, and a working schedule was drafted after determining the most suitable days and hours in the academic programme of the relevant classes so as not to interrupt the students' lessons. The discussions and the interviews were held with students, administrators and teachers in the selected schools on these suitable dates and times according to the schedule drafted together with school administrators. As planned, two survey professionals, an interviewer and an observer, attended the discussions. In the entire field survey process, a total of four survey professionals were involved and the observations were recorded.

Data Analysis

The recordings of the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions were subsequently transcribed. For the interviews and discussions where recording was not permitted, notes were taken during analyses of the discussions and categorized under the following headings:

- Gender roles
- Definition and scope of violence
- Reflection of violence on children (how their emotions are affected)
- Methods for tackling violence
- Level of women and men
- Prevention of violence.

Working Schedule

December 2011	Training of field professionals, preliminary testing
February – April 2012	Data collection
May – July 2012	Data analysis
August – October 2012	Drafting of the report



4. Findings

4.a. Focus Group Discussions with Students

The primary aim of this survey, which is to determine the perceptions and opinions of youth on domestic violence against women and to develop preventive projects and social policies, focus group discussions were conducted with secondary and high school students. The objective was to determine the sources of different perceptions through discussions on the topics among youth aged 12 to 18. Attempts were made to determine whether the social environments and socio-economic levels of the youth affected their perceptions. To this end, focus group discussions were held with youth according to the selected age group from schools at low, middle and high socio-economic levels in the provinces of Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın, included within the scope of this survey. Each focus group discussion was held with six to ten respondents. In these provinces, a total of 144 students participated voluntarily in the focus group discussions, with 24 female and 24 male students in the secondary school. In the provinces of Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın, a total of 284 students discussions from high school participated voluntarily: 25, 24 and 24 female students, respectively, and 21, 22 and 24 male students, respectively. Within the scope of the survey, opinions were obtained of a total of 284 students. Table 4 shows the distribution of participation by province, socio-economic level, gender and number of students (see Annex 5).

Instructions on the semi-structured discussion were used during the high school discussions (Annex 4). In addition, a story was used in secondary school discussions in order to facilitate the students' understanding of the relevant situation (Annex 3). The questionnaire aims at understanding the following issues:

- how respondents define and perceive the family;
- how they perceive the gender roles of women and men in the family and in society;
- how they define and perceive domestic violence against women and other types of violence;
- their opinions and perception on the causes for domestic violence against women;
- their opinions on the emotions and thoughts of family members following incidents of domestic violence against women;
- their opinions on how to prevent domestic violence against women.

In addition to these issues, four additional questions were posed to high school students in order to obtain their opinions on: how spouses should decide on having children; their decision on use of family planning methods; forced sexual intercourse; and whether a woman's refusal to continue fertility treatment is considered to not fulfilling her domestic responsibilities.

Two survey professionals from the field survey team participated simultaneously in all focus group discussions. At the beginning of the discussions, the youth were briefed on the survey. Then the survey



professionals obtained the students' approval for participating in the survey, both before and after the interviews. Discussions were recorded and then the respondents were asked to approve them. The reason for which students were asked for their approval also after the survey was to obtain their consent to use the data collected during the interview. During the discussions, one of the survey professionals observed and recorded the details, reactions and dialogue that would be impossible to discern from the recordings, such as gestures and facial expressions. The analyses of the opinions expressed during focus group discussions are presented below, first under two sub-headings – 'high school' and 'secondary school', and subsequently by gender – 'female students' and 'male students'.

4.a.i. High school students

4.a.i.1. Discussions with female students

In accordance with the sampling, group discussions were conducted in the selected high schools in the provinces within the scope of the survey. In the provinces of Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın, a total of 73 students participated in the discussions groups voluntarily – with 25, 24 and 24 students from each province respectively. The groups included seven to ten students. Table 5 shows the numbers of students by provinces and socio-economic levels.

Table 5: Distribution of female students, by province

Provinces	Low Socio-Economic Level	Middle Socio-Economic Level	High Socio-Economic Level	Total
Ankara	8	7	10	25
Erzurum	8	8	8	24
Aydın	8	16	0	24
Total	24	31	18	73

The analyses of the opinions expressed by students in these discussion groups are provided below.

Definition of the Family and the Roles of Women and Men in the Family

In the discussions conducted with female high school students, when asked to define the family, respondents initially used the dictionary definition and mentioned the significance of love, trust and a happy environment. It was stressed that the family should be an environment where the child would not feel alone and plays a major role in the development of a child .

During the discussion on the definition of the concept of family, there were striking differences in emphases by provinces and socio-economic levels. For example, during discussions with high and



middle socio-economic level students in Aydin Province, the importance of children's rights, especially the right to participate in the decision making within the family, was mentioned. Discussions with low socio-economic level students revealed that there was very limited communication in the family between the female and the male members. While both issues are in fact related to the child's freedom of expression and right of participation, it is evident that perceptions of the problems vary greatly.

During discussions with some groups, problems of family communication due to the features of adolescence were discussed:

"Establishment of a peaceful and happy home by individuals who are suitable for each other. Then they have children and they raise their children. Nice and happy..."

(Aydin, Female, High-Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"The first thing that comes to my mind is [that they are] the people who will accept you as you are when you come home, no matter who you are."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

During informal discussions on the roles of women and men in the family in all the three provinces, the mother's major duties were defined as protecting unity in the family, ensuring order, and providing care for the children; father's family responsibilities were defined as working at an income-generating job:

"Women are generally perceived as 'sitting at home, cooking, looking after the children, pampering the husband'; but it's not so. In my opinion, it is very difficult for a family to stay strong without a woman, because a woman supports her husband and assumes most of the responsibility of the children."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

It was observed that family roles and responsibilities of women and men differ by provinces and socio-economic levels. This difference is derived from social, cultural and socio-economic differences:

- During the discussions with groups from the high socio-economic level in the Aydin and Ankara Provinces, respondents stated that the father should assume responsibility for looking after, and earning a living for the family. In Aydin Province, it was emphasized that behaviour and attitudes of men with respect to assuming responsibility in the household chores should be shaped by their families right from childhood. In Ankara Province, on the other hand, most of the students said that their mothers become very tired and therefore fathers should help them. During the discussions with students from high socio-economic levels In Erzurum Province, it was stated that fathers help with household chores because mothers work at income-generating jobs.



- Discussions with middle socio-economic level students in Aydın and Ankara Provinces supported the opinion that women should be responsible for household chores; they disagreed that men should take any responsibility. They argued that men are tired when they come home from work and therefore cannot help with the housework, that society would not encourage them to do so, and that their role is mostly outside the home. Nevertheless, both in Ankara and in Aydın, students stated that fathers help with the housework when necessary. In Erzurum, at the middle socio-economic level, students emphasized that roles and responsibilities of women and men are different, while they recommended lifting the burden from women's shoulders. This group mentioned fathers that help with housework and emphasized that men may assume more responsibility in household chores. In Erzurum, it was also stated during the discussions with middle socio-economic level students that issues such as money and house management are the fathers' responsibilities.
- Student groups from the low socio-economic level in Aydın and Ankara Provinces would like to see women take a more active part in the working life. Therefore, there is greater sharing of household responsibilities by women and men at the low socio-economic level than at the middle socio-economic level.

"Since women and men are equal, they naturally have to assume each other's duties. For example, if the woman had not got married, she would do all the work by herself and work outside to earn her living. This should not change when she is married."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"I think they should [be involved in housework]; they should but there's a rigid view in society... when it's done, I don't know, it appears differently to people. For example, a man cleaning the house is not welcome at all in certain circles. (Another girl intervened to say that such men are called 'nancy'.³) And, for example, a woman working outside instead of a man is considered weird. Before anything else, these prejudices should be eliminated – this has to be done."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"The father goes to work and brings home the bread. The mother is at home. She has to be at home anyway... I mean, I go to school now... but my place is also the home... that's the way it is. The place where I should be is the home. I know this. My schooling won't change anything. Women must stay at home. It's better anyway. The mother should be a housewife and the father will go and work. As [a friend] says, they should have as many children as they will be able to

3 The numbers in the citations signify different students in the group. The students' names are not used; they are identified by numbers.



care for. For example, we are nine children, what's the difference? Thank God, we are fine, my older brothers started to make money and one of my older sisters left the nest. We all go to school, thank God. We are okay, but still, nine children is not all that good. As I say, if the father works, it is good – if the father in a family works, then it's good. That's the way it is."

(Aydın, Migrant, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"For example, I don't associate men with the kitchen... If I get married, I wouldn't let my husband cook."

(Ankara, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

"A few years ago, my mother used to work outside the home. The house seemed rather empty then. Everyone did whatever they liked – just like a bachelor's house – everyone prepared their food and washed up afterwards, and everyone did whatever they like in some kind of an order."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"A mother takes care of her children; she is compassionate and attentive towards them. If she does not have any children, her duty is to be loyal to her husband. The father – I mean, the man, the husband – is likely to earn a living, again to care for his children and his wife... If the mother is working, it's not right that she only takes care of the children – she has to take care of her husband, as well. It's very important to establish this balance."

(Erzurum, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"I mean, in the end, they are a couple; he also lives in the house. In Turkish society, the situation is like this: the man works outside the home and earns a living, and the woman is always at home looking after the children and doing the housework. However, the father lives in that house, as well. He has to help with chores, too."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"The father has to work and bring home the bread. The mother takes care of the housework and looks after the children. The children should respect their parents. This is their duty."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

The economic independence of women was raised as an important issue in all the groups. Nevertheless, upon addressing the issue during the discussions, it was observed that priorities differed. The most striking findings emerged during the discussions held in particular with students from the middle- and low socio-economic levels in Aydın Province. Middle socio-economic level students emphasized the importance of economic independence in terms of being capable of living independently and taking decisions independently; students from the low socio-economic level mentioned the enormity of the obstacles to be eliminated in order to reach this objective, as indicated in the quotations below:



"My aunt got divorced two months ago. She used to suffer endlessly because she did not have economic independence. She could have got divorced much earlier if she had economic independence. She had to suffer so much because of this. She had to follow certain procedures in order to obtain a divorce. She obtained it by court order. She could have got divorced earlier if she had economic independence."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"For example, I'm a 10th grader now, right? My mother and my father, we [became] homeless, got broke – we became beggars. I will reach my target no matter what. I am aware of my responsibilities and I will continue to be aware of them. I will go to school even if I am a beggar and I will not lean on anyone."

(Aydın, Migrant, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

In all of the discussions, it was indicated that helping their mothers is cited among the principal responsibilities of children. Young girls are of the opinion that families do not force their sons to do housework, but helping mothers with the housework is among the basic responsibilities of daughters. It was emphasized that attitudes of families differ with respect to the childhood period when sharing household responsibilities is taught to children.

The position of women and men in society

The position of women and men in society is considered among the major causes of violence against women. In all three provinces, there were different opinions on the lack of equality between women and men in society. Comments related to human and women's rights were expressed at the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province:

"I don't know why but, in my opinion, women today are considered ... they are regarded as bad women. Everything rests on women's shoulders. Men do whatever they like and they are never blamed. In addition, only women should do housework; when they're not doing housework, they have to look after the children, bring the children home from school – and men can come home at whatever hour they like, they can leave whenever they like. I am not saying this for all men, but for some, this is the case. It is different for some women. Women who don't act like this are regarded as bad... Neighbourhood pressure... For example, in an apartment building, there are some women who are housewives like I said and there are those who aren't – who live alone by themselves. Everyone says, 'Why is this woman like this, this is a bad woman, why is she this way?' Normally, all children dream of accomplishing great things, becoming important persons, but even if they do, it isn't enough. This isn't enough for society anymore. You should complete your apprenticeship, become successful and have such a family at the same time... but in my opinion you should not be forced to have a family to be a woman."

(Aydın, Female, High – Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



"Women and men are not equal in our society. Supposedly, they should be equal but no one actually abides by this – it is not at all the case in practice. Women have much more pressure on them, while men act more freely in all aspects. Women have no value in society. They are greatly repressed. It is also their own fault to some extent – they should not let themselves be repressed. They should show that they are strong. Because, for example, women do most of men's chores at home... Men become lost when there is no woman in the home. They should let everyone see women's power in order to maintain equality to some extent."

(Aydın, Female, High – Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

In all of the three provinces, it was stated that one of the important reasons for women and men not being equal in society is their different roles in childrearing. It was suggested that such sexual discrimination starts with the development of female and male characteristics of a child. During the discussion on this assumption, it was indicated that, when boys become men after they are circumcised, this is cause for celebration and their actions regarding sexuality, starting with flirtation, are recognized by the family and society. In contrast, depending on different locations, there are different practices related to menstruation; a girl who falls in love is taken away from school and sent far away. It was also indicated that at the low socio-economic level in Aydın Province (the group with internal migration) being a girl is used as an excuse for not being granting permission for school trips:

"Usually when boys flirt, they say that 'they are men and it's natural', but if girls flirt, they are disapproved of here. If this is to be disapproved, then neither should do it – this attitude is totally wrong in my opinion..."

(Erzurum, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"I believe men are considered more important. Women are behind... they are the repressed ones."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

The significance of sexuality with regard to gender construction by the family was intensely discussed, especially among the groups at the low socio-economic level in all three provinces. The opinion that gender roles are influenced by sexual norms was raised through in all provinces within different problem areas:

- In Aydın Province (the group with internal migration), female students emphasized that chastity-related issues are the main focus in raising girls. It was emphasized that families determine the lifestyles of young girls in this perspective. They stated that girls are not sent to school due to family and neighbourhood pressure, and that they live in a society where people believe that girls who go to school will have problems related to their chastity. In this group, the respondents stated that they work during the summer period to contribute



their school expenditures, because their income levels are very low. Again, in this group, it was determined that women's clothing and behaviour are also highly important. Some of the respondents stated that women's style of dress is an invitation to men.

- In Ankara Province, some of the respondents raised the issue of attaching too much importance to looking beautiful and well-dressed. They reached the conclusion that women's being beautiful and well-dressed is very important in terms of relationships with men. In this group, it was emphasized that women should look after themselves, but poor economic conditions and too much housework and childcare prevent them from doing so. Consequently, men have affairs with well-dressed women outside the home for this reason. It was indicated that many women do not want to become pregnant in order to keep their body in shape. Also, men become intimate with other women during pregnancy. In this group, it was also indicated that women should look beautiful to their husband.
- In Erzurum Province, it was emphasized that young girls should be careful in how they dress and try not to attract attention. Respondents indicated that they are not permitted to wear pants and that they are forced to cover their heads. It was also emphasized that young girls who walk in the street with casual and revealing clothes are perceived negatively.

In Aydın and Ankara Provinces, another indication of the limitation of women's independence due to gender was cited as "being able to go out at night". In Erzurum Province, this problem was often cited as women and girls not having permission to go outside the home during the day. In all of the three provinces, there are problems with women going out; however, they face different limitations. According to the discussions, the reasons behind these limitations were that women should be looked after and protected, and could be victim to gender violence. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that women seem to be reconciled to these opinions since they made no comments during the discussions. This suggests that women should not be subject to men's permission to go outside the house or that they should decide on their own actions.

"In my opinion, there are rules, but people fail to understand this issue...Issue of equality can be defined easily but cannot be understood by heart in their personal lives. People say 'women cannot do this or do that, women are like this, they are a bit weak, and they cannot do what men can do' – people should not be discriminated as women and men – but the human being makes this discrimination. Later, it is not an animal or another factor that would harm us; it is a human being. In my opinion, if the good in every human being can be manifested, nothing would happen to anyone in the late night."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"You get married on this condition. If a man coming home late offers the same right to the woman, you may marry him. If he does not give you this freedom, don't marry him. The woman would wait at home and the husband would come home whenever he likes. No way!"

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



In conclusion, it was emphasized during the discussions in all the three provinces that the factor of gender is dominant in raising girls:

“In other words, as they say, if the female dog does not wag her tail, the male dog would not tag along behind her. For example, if a girl speaks to a boy in the street, the girl is to be blamed. This is the case in Erzurum most of the time, but of course not in other places...”

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

The opinion that families begin to discriminate between their sons and daughters as they start school was indicated by all the groups. In particular, during the discussions with students from high socio-economic levels in Aydın and Ankara Provinces, respondents stated that they did not experience such problems in the outskirts. At the low socio-economic level in Ankara, a dominant opinion was voiced that women’s problem of access to educational institutions was recently solved. The common point arrived at during the discussions with the groups was that failure to attend educational institutions forms the basis for gender discrimination in adulthood.

“At school, especially in the eastern regions, ... they tend to be more keen on sending boys to school because they will grow up and look after their families, but they don’t care so much about sending girls to school. In other words, not in the provinces but in the rural areas, girls should sit at home, do the housework, get married and be looked after by their husbands. And when they have problems after they get married, they wish they had gone to school – this time they want to stand on their feet. Then, it’s too late... therefore, there may be inequality in the schooling of boys and girls.”

(Erzurum, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

In all the discussions, women’s economic independence was raised as one of the important issues. It was deemed that women’s economic independence is highly influential in their making their own decisions. The conflicting opinions within the groups of students who migrated to the west from the east, who had therefore undergone change, were very clearly observed. Here, the opinions were that women’s place was in the home and that women should work and share responsibilities with men. However, some of the respondents argued that men were superior to women in society. Some respondents believed that women with equal rights would prove highly influential in the elimination of the inequality between men and women in society.

“If you are aware of your own rights, I mean, if you are capable of knowing your own rights, you defend yourself. But my mother does not know her rights. If and when she knows her rights, then my father cannot do the things he does to her. He used to beat her, and now, okay, there



still quarrel. It is very important to be aware of one's rights. This is very important. That's why it is always very important to me that a woman goes to school. And a woman should always... I mean, male and female discrimination should not exist. I mean, gender difference is not that important to me. He is a man and he is the boss in the family. We surely respect our father always, because he is the head of the family. But my mother... a woman's word should also count. We should not be obliged to do whatever he says just because he is a man. A mother's word should also count. And for this to happen, education is obligatory in my opinion."

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

In terms of women's acquiring their economic independence, the significance of the gender structure emerges in the discussions on the types of jobs that a woman can do. During the discussions with students from the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province, a common opinion was that women would not be able to work at certain types of jobs (for example, as taxi drivers and security personnel) due to physical characteristics; however, it was emphasized that the reason for this was not their being incapable, but rather their physiology. At the middle and high socio-economic levels In Erzurum Province, it was mentioned that women's physiology influences their choice of profession. It was striking that while it was emphasized in all discussions that women's physiological characteristics and personal traits may influence their choosing certain professions, no limitations were cited for men.

Opinions of the definition of domestic violence against women and the types of violence

Violence was correctly defined as it is defined internationally by all the groups. Some of the definitions were: 'a man using force on woman'; 'the use of all types of force in such a way that would hurt a woman'; and 'a man's use of force when he believes that he is right'. Further, it was stated that 'a man having physical force and a woman being fragile and emotional, and having less physical force would lead to violence.

In all the groups, when defining violence, physical violence was first mentioned. In addition, when asked about the types of violence, they mentioned that violence was physical and psychological. Types of behaviour that are considered physical violence were beating, slapping, pushing, drawing a knife at the victim and killing. Violent psychological and social acts were described as denigration of the other, oppression pressuring someone, repression, limiting actions, neglect, disregard, making the person feel worthless, humiliation, insults, treatment of the woman as a housekeeper, scolding, swearing, not listening, threats, comparing with others, disparaging the other, domination, offences, hurting the other's feelings and humiliation in front of others. All groups agreed that psychological violence is much worse than physical violence. In addition, making a mess or upsetting the order of the home, i.e. not appreciating her efforts, was also defined as an act of violence. At the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province, the concept of 'economic violence' was explained as 'not buying what a person would like and controlling her with one's money'.



“When there is an issue that a man and a woman fail to agree on, a man, for example, uses his fists and slaps her on the face, and the woman is pinned down. She cannot do anything.”

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

“In my opinion, insulting a woman is the most severe type of violence against the woman’s soul. There are many of these kinds of violent people around me. When they realize that they fail to get what they want through physical violence, they start to insult women. They try to repress them and overpower them. They say, ‘Do I have to provide for you?’ – this is a devastating thing. It destroys all feelings between the two persons – respect, love, everything... There are such people around me.”

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th Grade)

“Also, saying ‘everything is mine,’ laying claims to everything and, for example, isolating a person may really be the greatest violence. Saying, ‘You are living in my house, spending my money and what more do you want?’ You can give much more to a person than a house or a car – for example, love and respect. If you kick this person out of the house, there are state facilities or she may have relatives, for example. Okay, you cannot stay more than 1 or 2 days at someone’s house, but a solution can be found in the end. This is really serious – being unkind and breaking someone’s heart. The pain of a slap on the face can go away but the pain of a blow deep down in the heart never goes away – never.”

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

“I mean, violence is not merely rude acts such as hitting and beating – verbal violence may be more severe. For example, harsh words are as severe as rude gestures, beating and hitting. Verbal violence is so very harmful and is also very serious in my opinion.”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

“Violence against women is not merely beating. Not respecting her thoughts and stirring up trouble on every occasion also count as violence, in my opinion. Because a woman is also part of the world, she also has opinions, but since men do not respect these opinions, violence is directed towards her. One should not think only of beating when violence is referred to. This is what we believe.”

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Sexual violence was brought up only when asked. Acts of sexual violence were defined as looking abusively at women, snapping back at them, trying to touch them, and rape. In Erzurum, prearranged marriage, forcing a woman to have many children and bringing in a second wife were also cited among acts of sexual violence.



At the middle socio-economic level in Ankara Province, “photo-mounting someone’s photographs” is cited among acts of sexual violence. Young girls stated that being subject to such an act of violence would ruin their lives and negatively affect their future lives.

In most of the groups, forced sexual intercourse in a marriage is defined as sexual violence. However, in some of the groups, forced sexual intercourse in a marriage is not defined as sexual violence on the grounds that men’s sexual drive is higher than a women’s:

“I know, it is about a woman being forced into sexual intercourse although she does not want it. For example, on some days women may not want [sex]. They may be sleepy or something else. But men say, ‘I want it and it will happen when I want it – it doesn’t matter if you want it or not; I want it and it will happen.’”

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

A low level of participation in discussions on sexual violence in some of the groups was observed. Some students hesitated, felt embarrassed and expressed themselves briefly and precisely.

During the discussions at the low socio-economic level groups in Ankara, it was indicated that remaining a virgin was extremely important and if a young girl is not a virgin, this may cause social labeling. Ultimately, all groups emphasized that it was very important for women to protect themselves from sexual violence.

Respondents addressed the issue of violence widely and covered all types of violence, from verbal violence to rape. It was striking that they discussed sexual violence by isolating it from themselves and their surroundings. They believed that it was women’s responsibility to protect themselves against sexual violence. They also believed that women could protect themselves against sexual violence if they acted in accordance with the type of desired behaviour and expectations of women in society. Nevertheless, the conflicting points between their opinions on this issue and on the equality of women and men in society suggest that their opinions have not yet matured. This may be a result of their lack of adequate experience in life and sexuality.

Causes of domestic violence against women

At the middle and high socio-economic levels in Aydın Province, the prevailing opinion was that domestic violence against women was less frequent in the western part of the country than in the east. The reasons for less frequent incidents of domestic violence against women in Aydın Province were cited as high levels of social indicators of the region. This may be due to the fact that in Aydın Province, especially at the middle and high socio-economic levels, the interviews were held at the level of general opinions, while in the other provinces, respondents were shared their opinions by giving examples of their experiences and observations.



Men's personality and psychology

Respondents stated that the man's personality and attitudes on gender issues and towards women developed during his upbringing influence his behaviour with respect to violence against women. In Ankara, it was stated that children's negative attitudes and behaviour learned from their families may result in violence during their marriage. This view was also voiced in Aydin Province. During the discussions with students at the high socio-economic level, it was mentioned that, normally, it is only possible to ensure that a child is raised in a positive environment in families at the high socio-economic level, and that families at the low socio-economic level lack the means for and capability of doing so.

Being in an environment of violence or being victim of violence during childhood was considered to cause a person to perform violent acts and show violent behaviour.

The causes of violence were cited as men's feelings of insufficiency and weakness, and his need to prove oneself. Men become violent when they lose control of their anger.

In Erzurum Province, the reasons cited for acts of violence may be as minor as a salt-free meal. It is considered that men who commit acts of violence for such reasons have psychological problems.

In Ankara and Aydin Provinces, men's drinking and jealousy were cited among the causes of violence.

The Socio-economic status of women

Economic weakness is also frequently cited as a significant indicator of women's incapability of standing up against violence; lack of economic independence causes them to accept violence. Women with economic independence were considered more powerful in the family setting.

At the high socio-economic level, the concept of 'rights' was expressed in various discussions; it was emphasized that violence was unacceptable in these terms. In contrast, the concept of rights was voiced less frequently at the middle and low socio-economic levels. Discussions focused on how women's negative attitudes and behaviour in the family or towards her husband cause her to become a victim of violence. During these discussions, it was indicated that a few slaps on the face would not be considered serious. Some respondents mentioned that women are inured to violence.

In Aydin Province, respondents believed that women were increasingly regarded as merchandise, to be claimed, and that violence increased with the influence of moral laws. In addition, certain sayings involving beating women and girls were used as proof that this is also supported by society:

"A women who is beaten says to herself, 'Since I was beaten, I must have done something wrong and I have to correct this,' and she does not engage in the act again. In addition, although the blame is put on the man, he again adopts the same type of behaviour when he discovers the woman's slip-up – not slip-up but, let's say, some act that he does not approve of. This way, the woman is not herself anymore – she is a different person. She is not herself, in fact."

(Aydin, Female, Middle – High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



Disapproval of women's behaviour

In Erzurum province, respondents mentioned that some of women's acts and behaviour may be causes of violence. The girls used expressions such as "women deserve violence" during the discussions. Students at the high socio-economic level mentioned that women ask themselves what they have done when they become subject to acts of violence.

During the discussions at all three socio-economic levels In Erzurum Province, a common viewpoint was noted that women may become victim of violence due to problems involving chastity. In addition, during the discussions at the middle socio-economic level, it was stated that men may have relationships with other women and that this should be accepted by women, that men have these rights. The opinion was that when a woman fails to please a man, his being with another woman is accepted in society:

"We talked about Turkish men, you know; the most important thing for Turkish men is their honour. The most important thing that drives them crazy is related to chastity. If such a thing [against his honour] happens, he may become violent, and if the woman tries to build a new life for herself and fails, he may ask for divorce. This is the one thing that Turkish men cannot stand."

(Erzurum, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"And there's the issue of cheating. Let's say a man cheats on a woman, they say, 'He is a man, he can do it; you must put up with it.' When he sees a beautiful woman, he wants to look at her. When this happens, they say things about her, but when a woman does this – I mean both are wrong – it's again the woman's fault. This time they say, 'What kind of a woman are you, you couldn't keep your man at home, you couldn't do this and do that.' When the man cheats, then the woman says, 'I think there is a problem with me.'"

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

One of the causes of violence was cited as women's failure to fulfill her roles and responsibilities in the family and in society. It was indicated that behaving or acting in a way that the man does not permit may be a cause of violence. Women leaving the house without permission or staying on the balcony in her track suit were given as examples of why she is victim of violence.

"For example, I came across an incident recently with a friend of mine. A woman had bought bread from the market. She handed us the bags. Her husband was calling, he was shouting, 'Why did you go out, didn't I tell you that you could not go outside the house?' She said, 'What should I do, you didn't buy any bread before you left in the morning.' We saw that they [men] act violently even if a woman goes outside to buy bread."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



The Marriage Structure

During the discussions held at the middle-high socio-economic level in Aydin Province, early marriages are also a kind of violence. Legal explanations of issues such as the age of civil marriage and religious marriage were clearly provided. Issues were raised such as the dowry requested, the age difference between the engaged boy and girl, and polygamy, which places women in a disadvantaged level. Nevertheless, it was emphasized that many women give in in order continue their marriages.

“Yes, women fail to defend themselves in society. For example, in ... there is no civil marriage; they don't get married and live together, and they have a lot of children. Then, the man goes to a different woman whenever he wants. It's so absurd that there's no civil marriage.”

(Aydin, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“And also this: just so that her husband does not abandon her, she asks for a second wife. Even this happens.”

(Aydin, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Respondents commented that girls who marry at school age become dependent on their husbands:

“In my opinion, our current age is just the right age for education. If a girl gets married at this age, she will get used to her husband. She would start arranging her life according to her husband's. Then, when this happens, the husband would dominate her and have her do whatever he want her to do. She becomes a puppet of the man somehow.”

(Aydin, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

In addition to the above, another cause of violence was cited as the faulty marriage structure in Ankara Province. It was discussed that if marriages are established according to criteria such as profession and income, then the problem may arise of couples that do not get along well together. All of the groups stressed the significance of couples getting to know each other before marriage, failing which violence would be inevitable.

Social norms and values

During the discussions at the middle socio-economic level in Aydin Province, the environment in which people live was mentioned as influential in the development of their behaviour. It was emphasized that value judgments formed in social environments of individuals shape the development of their identities. Discussions revealed that there is also violence in the families with high levels of education, which shows both the significance of social norms in society and in families.



“Rigid judgments influence an individual’s personality anyway. There are the opinions of the people surrounding you, as ... said, there are rigid judgments and these affect a person’s thoughts.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“I think that in this part of the country, cultural and family structures are a bit more developed and I think that society is a bit more educated. But as we go to other regions, I believe there is more violence – I don’t know, maybe due to lack of education, ignorance [four respondents agreed with this view during the discussion].

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

A similar view was voiced differently In Erzurum Province. One opinion was that social pressure can lead to a man’s violent behaviour against a woman. The incident described below is an example:

“There’s also something like this – I don’t know if this is valid for everyone but – the man, i.e. the husband, may rise to the bait, too. Let’s say his brother agitated him and then, for a very minor reason, he rises to the bait of his brother and comes home and beats his wife. I say this because I have seen this in my family. I don’t know if it would be right to tell you this but, this happened to us. I had an uncle, and when he bothered my father about my older sister who was at high school then (and she is attending the university now), saying, ‘I saw your daughter there’ and ‘How can you go out in the street in your village’ and so on...”

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Reactions of the Mother, Father and Children to Domestic Violence

The women’s emotions

In all the provinces, a harsh psychological condition was defined in which a woman victim of violence will feel hurt, devastated, humiliated, helpless, weak, depressed, repressed, worthless, belittled and miserable. Women’s self-confidence would diminish and they would become scared, introverted and depressed. With regard to depressions, more severe expressions were used, such as perceiving life as worthless, losing one’s joy of living, and wishing to die.

Another opinion expressed was that the woman believes that she’s guilty. It was emphasized that women’s feelings of insufficiency increase when they do not have economic independence. It was also stressed that the woman may think that she has done something wrong and deserves violence.

Another group mentioned that violence may lead women to change their feelings towards their husband. They may be offended by their husband and lose their love for him:



“The man is the one who beats the woman and he is the one to be embarrassed – but the woman gets embarrassed.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“She believes that she is bad. Maybe she cannot attribute this to her husband – that may be the case, too. I don’t know. When she gets beaten, she may think, ‘I such a helpless, weak person that I’m being beaten’. Maybe she blames herself for being beaten and she gets embarrassed. She may also think that she would be outcast because she is beaten.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Women may hide the fact that they are victims of violence so that society would not condemn them and their family would perceive them positively. A common opinion expressed was that women might feel that they need to accept violence if they have children:

“In general, they always think about what others would say, such as ‘What would the people around me think and say of me if I do this and do that?’ – they don’t think about themselves.”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

In all three provinces, in general, it was emphasized that women experienced negative feelings. Some respondents suggested that violence should be kept secret and women should act as if everything were normal. Women who think that they should keep the violence a secret due to guilt, believe that they deserve to be victims of violence. The fact that feelings and attitudes towards resisting violence were rarely expressed suggests that violence against women exists in society and is accepted.

The men’s emotions

In Aydın Province, it was believed that the respondents used their minds rather than their feelings when answering the question. Initially, reasons were cited for men committing violence (i.e. proving his strength, making himself listened to, using force due to his failure to express himself and to solve his problems through dialogue), and his emotions were then described. Although some men may regret what they have done, they continue to be violent anyway, which indicates a lack of true regret. A group of respondents stated that the perpetrator of violence would feel relieved.

“He must beat his wife in order to make himself listened to, convinced that he would be able to solve his problems this way. He probably thinks that the solution is not talking the issue over and doing something about it, but beating his wife – he thinks that he would be able to solve the problems with beating.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



"I believe that he feels relieved after using force. I think he is relieved. When we hit an object for example, a pillow or something, we feel relieved and relaxed. Therefore, there must be those who feel that way."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

In Ankara Province, young girls tried to adopt a positive approach towards men's feelings. Respondents mostly discussed feelings such as regret, worry and remorse above all. However, they emphasized that the man would not be upset or feel regretful in cases where he has psychological problems or when he no longer has feelings towards the woman. In Ankara, some respondents stated that men who committed violence would feel "strong". Some girls stated that the feeling of regret would arise later and he would return to his wife. They expressed that men in their immediate surroundings use various methods for redemption in their old age:

"He feels relieved, thinking 'Okay, now I'm strong'. My grandma is currently in her 70s and so is my grandpa. He continuously used force and violence against her – violence, violence, violence... Of course, this is important in terms of being educated and developed – you hit a woman, she is silent and you rule in the family. The man feels like a king – and he doesn't care if she cries."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

In Erzurum Province, on the other hand, different expressions were used by young girls. They stated that a man who commits violence against his wife would feel a sense of victory and take pleasure; and he may feel regret and remorse if he had a conscience. It was indicated that, if the man has made it a habit of using force, then he would not care, or feel anything. They mentioned that certain TV series involved particular male role models who do not care or feel anything. During the discussions at the middle socio-economic level in Erzurum Province, women and men were compared; men's feelings were deemed superficial, while women were said to internalize their negative feelings.

Different explanations from the three provinces arose from social and cultural differences. Factors such as the roles of men and women and family structures observed in society may have led to different perceptions of men's reactions.

The child's emotions

The feelings and attitudes of children who become witnesses of violence differ according to their ages.

Two options were stated for children who grow up in an environment of violence: the first is to adopt the father's manners. In all the discussions, a common opinion was that children learned violent behaviour from their fathers; and the second is that they would be sorry for their mothers for such violence and would not be violent towards their future wives:



“When they see their mother being beaten, children feel ... I mean, they love their mother and also their father, but when they see their mother being repressed, they are more They want to defend their mother, but again this gets rooted in the sub-conscious and they may do the same to their mothers when they grow up. We had a neighbour who used to beat his mother before she died. Yes. Her son would beat her. The woman was sick, she couldn't walk and he would beat him when she did not do what he wanted – for example, when she did not cook for him. Some things get rooted in the sub-conscious.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Girls stated that they would become estranged from their fathers and start to hate him. They stated that girls would stay close to their mothers and that this may even cause them to move away from men:

“Yes, I think she would feel different. Let's say my father commits violence against my mother – I would be totally depressed. I would feel as if I were the victim of violence. For example, if in the future something like this happens and my father is violent towards my mother although he is a good husband, this means he has problems. I would start to hate him.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Children whose fathers commit violence against their mothers would suffer, become silent and introverted. These children would feel helpless, insecure and lose their self-confidence. These might draw away from their fathers, disrespect him, hate him, turn against him and avoid spending time with him. Also, it would disturb them that their mothers are hurt: “He hit my most valuable possession!”

In Erzurum, it is also widely accepted that children may be influential in preventing domestic violence when they reach a certain age. It was stated that when the child is young, if s/he reacts against violence, then the child may also be a victim, but once grown up, s/he may stand in front of his/her mother and protect her.

“I tell you briefly – the child feels bad and has problems at school, too. S/he fights with his/her friends and tries to beat them up. S/he would try to prove his/her strength. Because the child is victim of violence at home, because s/he is repressed... s/he tries to prove his/her strength at school by beating up on others. When his/her father beats his/her mother and his/her mother cries, the child thinks, ‘If my father beats my mother, he's strong, I should also beat her.’ ”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

During the discussions at the low socio-economic level in Aydın Province (the group with domestic migration), some respondents had mothers who were victims of violence. The emotions of these children were highly intense and clearly depicted the feelings and thoughts of children in the face of



violence. The children reflected both their own emotions and their mothers' desperation. They also underlined how the concept of chastity puts pressure on women and girls within the feudal structure. In this group, it was observed that girls appreciated their mothers and are hopeful that their mothers would object to violence:

"And then there was again a fight at home... he beat my mother because of me. And I was so full of sorrow that I made a vow that I would never get married no matter what. I don't want to get married having seen what my mother is going through. Therefore, I hate men – I have no faith in them anymore. I will go to school. I will beg if I have to, but I will definitely finish school and ensure that my mother will not be in need of that man. I thought of running away from home numerous times – I didn't do it thinking of my mother's honour."

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"It's always those desperate, those self-sacrificing mothers who are beaten in these times. And I believe that these beaten mothers are the best mothers in the world. I hope the children of those beaten mothers will take revenge against these fathers. I swear that I will. I am against violence anyway. I hate it."

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

During the discussion with the low socio-economic level group in Aydın Province children stated that they feel desperation and hatred and have developed a sense of revenge, that they feel very badly for their mothers and cried for them. These children believe that they will do anything to prevent experiencing this problem.

"We have lived through a lot. However, thank God, my father has changed over the last five years. He made us suffer so much – so very much. My mother looked after us, she worked and raised us. She pulled all of our weight. My father used to beat my mother a lot – I won't be like my mother. I will defend myself and I will never be a victim of violence. I will be violent if necessary but I will never be victim of it. That's the way it is. I never, never want women to... if necessary... I mean, I hope nothing like this happens... If necessary, I will... Women really suffer enormously. Therefore, they must be deeply cared for."

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

It was observed during the discussions with the low socio-economic level groups in Aydın Province (the groups with domestic migration) that some of the techniques used by these children to release their stress (such as hitting an object, shouting in an empty room, scolding the sister/brother, crying, tearing paper) involve violence, although they stated that they were not in favour of violence. These children perform these acts as learned behaviour despite being against violence.



Prevention of violence against women

Ailede kadına yönelik şiddetin ortaya çıkmaması için; (GALİBA ÇEVİRİLMEMİŞ

In Aydın Province, the importance of interventions for preventing domestic violence against women was emphasized. Since it is extremely difficult for men to stop their violence against women, it was recommended to focus on interventions that would empower women.

Increasing the educational level of society

The importance of women attending educational institutions and bettering themselves was emphasized. It was also stressed that women should be informed and made aware of the importance of education. It was indicated that the information and awareness-raising efforts may be carried out in institutions such as public training centres. It was also considered very important to initiate information and awareness-raising efforts in childhood and integrate messages into cartoons, the high school curricula and in TV programmes.

Raising women's status

The opinion was that when girls pursue their education and acquire economic independence, this would contribute to strengthening their status in the family. The empowerment of women in the family would help defend their rights:

"Let's say there is a woman who has not attended any school and a man with an occupation. When the man comes home and does not find his soup on the table, he directly tells the woman that she was at home all day, she should have cooked and cleaned, and this way he puts pressure on her. However, if the woman also has a job, she has an excuse. She could say that she also works, that she has a profession. She may then be able to say that everything should be shared. But when she is not educated, she lets herself be repressed in that sense. This rationale becomes consolidated: my husband works and brings home the money. If he does not bring home the money, then I cannot do anything. She feels that she has to ingratiate herself to him. Therefore, it is much more important for girls to go to school!"

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

It was indicated that by acquiring their economic independence, women would not appear desperate in the face of violence. Women's economic independence would become increasingly important in beginning their lives anew after the relevant incident of violence. It was stated that lack of economic independence causes women to resign themselves to violence.



"But in my opinion, most of the women who are victim of violence in our society do not have economic independence. As this is the situation, they have no place to go... they are somewhat desperate... The woman keeps silent and defends her husband... I don't know how to say it... protects him so that her family would not fall apart, her children's psychological well-being would not be adversely affected... This is the situation. This way, families give this right to fathers, I think. They do that... This also has an impact..."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

It was stated that acquiring economic independence can be ensured by attending educational institutions. A participant who had observed domestic violence (and who was also a victim) believed that her way out was through continuing her education. Respondents who lived through violence stated that their mothers recommended the same thing to them. According to the remarks of the young girls, the mother and daughter resisted violence and pressure to not send the girls to school.

Women's access to their rights

While a common solution that "violence against women can be stopped with equality" was developed during the discussions, there was also concern that this equality could not be ensured. Respondents stated that women and men cannot be equal physically; they can only be equal mentally. It was emphasized that this equality could be made possible by better defining women's rights:

"If only equal rights for women are acquired...(F-2: That is so hard.) (F-3: Very difficult...) (F-4: This is the case throughout the world – it's not only us.) (F-5: Yes.)

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"In my opinion, the overall social structure does not permit this... Because I... I mean, I see us as an undeveloped society – in social terms. We shouldn't be making generalizations, but we all are individuals, and in Europe and elsewhere decisions are taken in line with human rights... it seems so in terms of women... but here... it's much better over there."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

During the discussion at low socio-economic level in Aydın Province, it was emphasized that women's awareness of their rights and defending them would enable them to resisting violence. They stated that, although they live in Aydın, they have to abide by the rules of the east.

"This is what we are trying to say. When a woman is aware of her responsibilities, for example, my father cannot beat me just because he is my father. My uncle has no right to come and beat me. I don't want to give this right to them. Therefore, it is very important for women to be aware of their rights. If here I am, for example, aware of my responsibility, no one can come and beat



me. Nobody else can acquire your rights for you. But for example, if I am not aware of my rights, anyone can come and repress me. They can beat me too... this is the case in my family. You know, in the East, women are despised a little. Things happen... they can beat and swear at women. We live through a lot... Life is not same as in the West really... Life in the East is not as easy as in the West. Women suffer a lot in the East. Men don't work – men rule but they are not ethical either. But some are not. They make women work – women work in the field, they lead a dog's life trying to earn a living for the family. In addition, men sit at cafes gambling from morning until evening. There are such people. But when a woman is aware, when she is aware of her responsibilities, she can claim her rights. If a man is aware of his responsibilities, for example, if he says 'I have to do this for my family and I must act like this towards my wife', then would there be any conflict between them? There would be no fighting and no disturbance. Therefore, both parties must be aware. Currently, this is a bit difficult. I mean people really suffer a lot in the East. Nothing is easy."

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

During the discussions among respondents at the low socio-economic level in Ankara Province, it was emphasized that women must care for their husbands, be nice to them and accept their rule in order to prevent violence.

"Yes, why is it always the women who have to assume a humble position? For example, I cannot stand this. He would say something to me and I would have to assume a humble position – why? Why are women so... if he talks too much and you yell at him, he may even use force on you. Women are so weak, defenseless. My mother is an example – she has suffered so much violence. I am against this – how can you hit a woman? Thus, men are so... they are obstinate."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader, daughter of a woman who was divorced due to violence)

Increasing awareness for violence against women

In Aydın, it was suggested that educational campaigns especially for girls should be organized. Informative programmes and public spot announcements during these programmes were also suggested. It was also indicated that men's mentality has to be changed in order to eliminate violence. Thus, the importance of initiating such informative efforts at very young ages was emphasized.

"It all happens in the mind. In the end... we have to change the man's mentality, I believe. As long as his mentality is not changed, he would do it [commit violence] no matter what."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



It was underlined that the reaction of the woman following the first act of violence was very important. This reaction would be determinant in terms of the continuation of acts of violence. Therefore, awareness raising trainings on violence against women are recommended for women. Access to each and every woman is to be provided:

"I believe this is the duty of the municipality of that province, that town. They must approach all women, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, and give seminars. As a family... including the children... Seminars should be provided to all members of the family separately."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Women must become aware. For example, seminars may be organized to this end. If children are made aware, women would benefit. Some efforts truly must be made because, really, we have come to such a point that women are subject to all kinds of suffering. For example, you [the interviewer] came to us; when I tell my mother about this, she will go tell her friends. This way, women will become aware and maybe at some point violence will be alleviated. I really think what you're doing is very good – I like it very much. For example, now I will go and tell my friends about this and I will tell my mother about this and she will tell her friends – I think this will raise women's awareness."

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

Some of the suggestions put forward during the discussions at the low socio-economic level (the group with internal migration) relate to men's life styles. It was suggested that men's educational levels should be raised and that they should be informed about violence against women, and in particular, TV programmes involving violence should be discontinued. It was mentioned that men would be positively influenced from being engaged in various activities instead of sitting at cafes all day. Another suggestion was that a man should be recorded as he beats his wife and be made to watch the recording so that he would see what the woman suffers in order to develop empathy:

"Yes. There should be many more awareness-raising activities... But some fathers – being men, they should look after the family and they should work. If they are not educated, then there is much violence. I believe men should definitely be schooled. Even if women aren't schooled, men should be schooled because then there would not be violence."

(Aydın, Migration, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

Planning of marriage and sustaining a healthy family life

It is believed in all the three provinces that planned marriages would be influential in preventing violence against women. It was indicated that affectionate and understanding attitudes of family members towards each other would ensure that children adopt correct behaviour.



It was in Erzurum Province that opinions in this respect were voiced the most. It was emphasized that incorrectly structured marriages as well as difference in the status of spouses were among the causes of violence. It is suggested that these problems be solved.

“One should marry the correct person. Marriage at an early age is no good – one should not get married at once; first you must get to know the person thoroughly.”

(Erzurum, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

“A woman should marry a literate person – there is a big difference even between a secondary school graduate and a high school graduate. The difference between a schooled individual and an unschooled individual is great. If you have been educated, then you have reached a certain level. Even if you have not attended school, you may be an entrepreneur and improve yourself, and adopt a different viewpoint towards life, as said. This way you can resist violence somehow.”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

It was highlighted that other preventive measures may include informing both women and men, and providing them pre-marital counselling services.

Reactions to domestic violence against women

Women’s attitudes to violence

In the three provinces, respondents stated that women show different reactions when they become victim of violence.

In Aydin Province, respondents stated that women would react differently when being victims of violence. Some of the respondents stated that they would not react harshly to minor acts of violence such as a slap on the face or pulling hair, while others said that they would counter the act and still others said that they would prefer solving the issue through dialogue. They believed that having children and marrying for love would require finding a solution in stopping violence against women

“I don’t know, let me not talk big since I have not experienced it and don’t know what happens if I do, but I would not think of divorcing right away in the first instance if I have married the person out of love. I would try to solve it by talking to my husband.”

(Aydin, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



There were also certain respondents in Aydin Province who indicated that the woman should not defend her husband and she should file a complaint against him. Some respondents believed that women should not be dependent on their husbands, that they must be able to make their own decisions, and raise their children with awareness of violence and how to resist it.

Respondents from the low socio-economic level in the provinces of Ankara and Erzurum stated that women have to yield to violence if she has children.

“There are also those who are desperate. The man beats the woman – especially recently – a woman has eloped, and her family has already disowned her because of the elopement, and she became victim of violence. She has no choice but to surrender. She has no way out. If she gets divorced, there is no place she can go to and seek refuge. Her mother has disowned her, her father has disowned her and she has no place to seek refuge; she is by herself – what can she do? Let’s say she gets divorced – a few months later the man would come to get her and she would have to go with the man. Because the woman knows this, when she’s beaten, she says ‘ok, he hit me but I hope he won’t hit me next time’ and she endures.”

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

At the middle socio-economic level, respondents believed that women should assume a humble attitude in order for the man to resume his normal behaviour. The respondents in this group suggested solutions such as not cooking or leaving the house temporarily so as to raise men’s awareness of their behaviour.

In Erzurum Province, children were also charged with responsibility in families where there is violence against women. Children are expected to protect their mothers and prevent violence against her once they grow up. Nevertheless, during the discussions, it was mentioned that there were opposite incidents, for example, where a boy started to beat his mother when he grew up, and continued to beat her to death.

Women seeking their legal rights

It has also been stated that women should seek their legal rights if they become victim of violence. Whereas in Erzurum, the general opinion at the low socio-economic level was that a marriage should be sustained no matter what, in the middle and high socio-economic level, respondents stated that women should defend their legal rights and take legal action.

In Aydin Province, some of the respondents stated that they would never accept being victim of violence and they would leave their husband at once and get divorced. It was stressed here that, after an act of violence, woman and man should not live together, but should separate. During this separation, it was suggested that the man should leave the house. The respondents mentioned that, following the act of



violence, several measures should be taken including contacting the police and trying to obtain a court order. However, respondents believed that many problems would arise during this process. It was stated that the police has limited authority, men are not penalized and women are forced to give in. Certain facts about the new family protection law were mentioned and certain remarks were made during the discussions. In Aydın Province, it was observed that although measures to respond to violence are well known, there is a lack of confidence.

During the discussions at the high socio-economic level in Ankara and Erzurum, it was underlined that women should react immediately when acts of violence begin. This initial reaction was emphasized several times and was much valued by the respondents.

It was indicated in Ankara and Erzurum Provinces that divorce may be a solution. It was also stated that the situation may be explained to the children, and that a separation between the mother and father would be better if the children were not estranged from their father.

"It may be explained to the children that a family go on like this [violence], that it will be better to separate."

(Erzurum, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"The woman herself must stop it; a woman should not feel dependent on a person – the moment he starts beating her, she should go and turn to laws, which are in her favour. She should go and file a case for divorce and take her children with her and start a new life. She should neither let her children be victim of violence nor ruin her own life – she has to go and file that case."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

It was observed in Ankara and Erzurum Provinces that women are able to recur to the relevant official authorities in case of incidents of violence and are aware of information such as a dedicated telephone line for this purpose. Still, however, there were also girls in this group who were not aware of such information. Clearly, efforts spent in the struggle against violence against women do not reach everyone.

"It is difficult to determine the families living through violence because neither the woman nor the man would admit it – I, personally, cannot think of anything to solve the issue. If the woman notifies the police, then the officials would go and intervene."

(Erzurum, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

During the discussions at the middle socio-economic level In Erzurum Province, the need for solidarity between women and certain associations working in this field was mentioned. Respondents in this group also stated the importance for women who are victim of violence to engage in social interaction



instead of locking themselves in their houses and that this would make them feel better. It was indicated that these women may also seek support from civil society organizations working in this field. It was indicated that awareness of civil society organizations working on the issue would strengthen solidarity in this respect.

“Let’s say you’re not a victim of violence, but you must think about this issue because other female friends and acquaintances are being victim of violence. Let’s put it this way: they must be more sensitive to this issue and try to raise awareness among society. If and when this issue is given greater importance on the agenda in various provinces, then the incidents of violence may diminish.”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

“I mean, for example, I think there are associations that combat violence against women. Also, in our society, a woman may be victim of violence at home; she may be unhappy and regretful, and may mention this to her neighbour, who in turn gives her advice. She might give nonsense advice – maybe if she seeks advice from a professional, some things might change. But if you go and ask your neighbour, what good would your neighbour’s advice do you? How much can she know about your husband? How much can she help you? Also, as we said, these men may also be considered sick in our society. If she [the neighbour] thinks so, she may act underhandedly. She may tell the children – let’s sit and talk about what we can do, let’s do something. If the man is normal, then he would understand by talking about it. If the situation is more serious, if the man is sick, if he cannot see what he’s doing, then he should receive professional help.”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

Increasing punishments given to male perpetrators of violence

In Aydın, it was underlined that it was extremely important to punish a man who had committed an act of violence. In addition, families who live through violence stated that the state should punish such a perpetrator and that this punishment should serve as a deterrent. It was also indicated that the woman should be taken under protection.

“I watched it on the television news: a woman went to the police after having been victim of violence. They talked to the man and told the woman that they had made a compromise with her husband and sent her back home. And the man killed the woman 3-4 days later. Therefore, I mean, not only must women become aware of these facts but also the state have to ... punishment should be increased, I think.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



"I believe that the state may inflict deterrent punishments. If they remain unresponsive... for example, a man beats his wife, goes to jail for two days and then he's out. If as soon as he's out, he kills his wife... then the state is also guilty. If the state does nothing about it, then men continue killing."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

In all three provinces, respondents stated that men would become more violent than before after having been sentenced for this, which makes it more important for women to be taken under protection.

"Since the police also beat people, they don't do anything to men who beat their wives. This is usually the case anyway. Most women are beaten, they go to the police and the police sends them back home. The police talk to the man but then send him home. Then the same thing happens; the woman goes to the police again and the police sends her back home. The man gets no punishment. In my opinion, when the woman files a complaint about the man, he should receive such a punishment that he won't do it again. But in our country, I haven't seen this happen until now... And then, after some time, women see that nothing happens when they file complaints and they stop doing anything about the issue. Then there remains nothing to do. The Government enact the law, yes they enact laws, but in my opinion, none are implemented. It would be nice if they implemented these laws that they are enacting."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Attitudes of families

One of the issues raised in Aydın Province was the attitudes of the victim's own mother, father and sisters and brothers towards violence. The respondents believed that, in many levels of society, married women become estranged from her family and form a new family with her husband, and when there is violence, it is considered the problem of the victim's new family – the victim's old family do not get involved and they do not support their daughter. Although some defended this view, other respondents believed that it was important for the woman's family to protect their daughter:

"And there is also this: let's say a woman becomes victim of violence and she goes to her parents to ask for help. Sometimes fathers say to their daughter, 'You are married now and you are outside the scope of our honour; you belong to him, he can both beat and love you'. Then the woman thinks, 'Ok, then, there is nothing to do. If I get divorced, then I'm on the street; since I don't have a profession, I have nothing, I would be all alone, I won't be able to do anything, my family would not accept me, I would be outcast by society – it's better to stay at home and suffer.'" However, if families protect their daughters, object to this, embrace their daughter and say, 'We didn't marry you so that you'd be beaten – then violence would be prevented to some extent. When the woman's father and her brothers stand up to the man, he would be scared and understand that the woman is not unprotected. I believe that this is a very important factor."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



It is necessary to prevent young women from dealing with their problems all by themselves in case of domestic violence. It is necessary to change the norms and values of society in order to strengthen women's communication with their families, which requires a rather lengthy process. Therefore, several support mechanisms are required for identifying women who are victim of violence and taking them under protection.

Supporting women's Lives

This issue was discussed intensively in Aydın Province. Divorced women's conditions concerning finding jobs and their social security issues were discussed in depth and it was suggested that women need more support to be able to live alone.

Treatment of the perpetrator of violence

In the provinces of Ankara and Erzurum, some respondents stated that a man who commits violence has psychological problems and must be treated immediately. During the discussions, it was pointed out that such men had no control over their temper and needed treatment.

Approaches related to the Case Scenario

Case Scenario 1: How do couples decide on having a child? Would it be possible if the man wants to and the woman does not? Would it be possible if the woman wants to and the man does not? Would this decision fall within the definition of committing violence? Why?

Aydın Province

During the discussions at both the middle and high socio-economic level, it was indicated that couples should decide on having children together. However, it was underlined that the financial situation of the family should definitely be taken into account in determining the number of children. The respondents at this level defined as violence having children against the will of one of the spouses. It was mentioned that it would be better not to have children if one of the spouses does not want it.

At the low socio-economic level (the group that arrived with internal migration), it was indicated that it is natural to have children and that the first child in families is always desired. Nevertheless, it was stated that the decision-making role of the father is more dominant in terms of timing.

"If the man does not want it [children], then it's okay. But if the man wants children, then they have children – even through sexual violence, they have children."

(Aydın, Muş, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)



Ankara Province

During the discussions at all the three levels, the common opinion was that the woman and the man should decide on having children together and that otherwise it would be considered violence.

Erzurum Province

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, it was maintained that spouses should decide together on the issue of having children. At middle socio-economic level, it was maintained that this decision should ideally be taken together but, in real life, couples had children when the man wants it.

In addition, during the discussion at the low socio-economic level, there was no common opinion as to whether the decision to have children should be taken by the spouses together. It was indicated that if the man wants a child, then the couple would have a child even if the mother does not want it, and that, in an opposite case, the couple would not have children until the man wants to have children. Nevertheless, respondents maintained that it would not be appropriate to have children if one of the spouses did not want to.

Case Scenario 2: Certain methods may be used by the family in order not to have children; some are used by women and some by men. What do you think about men deciding on the family planning method that a woman uses even if she does not want the method? Would you consider this violence? Why?

Aydın Province

During the discussions at the middle and high socio-economic levels, it was stated that if a woman does not want to use a family planning method and is forced to use it, then this is defined as violence. However, at the high socio-economic level, respondents maintained that it is better for the man to use such methods.

This was also considered as violence during the discussion at low socio-economic level. However, respondents indicated that it would not be defined as violence if there are other medical options

Ankara Province

Women forced to use the family planning method they do not wish to use was defined as violence. The respondents adopted the opinion that women and men are equal and they should decide together.

Erzurum Province

Women forced to use the family planning method they do not desire was defined as violence.



Case Scenario 3: During marriage, men and women have a sexual relationship. A woman must have sexual intercourse with her husband even if she does not want it, when her husband desires it. What is your opinion in this regard? Would this be an act of violence? Why?

Aydın Province

During the discussions at middle and high socio-economic levels, most of the respondents indicated that such forced action is violence and unacceptable. However, some respondents stated that men had the right to ask for sexual intercourse and that women should accept this. In addition, some of the respondents objected to this opinion. During the discussion at the low socio-economic level, this was acknowledged as violence.

"If the woman does not want to lose her husband or partner, she must surrender to some things. I mean, if the man wants it on a given day and the woman does not want it, then the man may go and do it with another woman, but if a woman does it, it is regarded as highly inappropriate. It would be bad for her, too."

(Aydın, Female, Middle – High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"It's like since he is your husband you cannot be with anyone else but him. It's obvious that your views do not match – you can do it not to lose him, because he wants it and you care about him. But then who is this man that you don't want to lose? Is he your mother or your father? He's just an outsider in the end. You should not be forced to do something that you don't want, in my opinion."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Of course, in such a case, you are being considered a sexual object – when the man does this to the woman. It means he is using her."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Ankara Province

The situation defined in this Suggestion is indicated as "rape". Respondents voiced their views that marriage was not only about sexuality, but also about sharing.

Erzurum Province

During all the discussions, this situation was acknowledged as "rape". However, other views were that it should not be considered as violence between married couples.



Case Scenario 4: A woman who does not have children is continuously taken to a doctor so that she can have a child. This woman fails to fulfill her intra-marital responsibilities. What do you think about these statements – can you explain this, please?

Aydın Province

The treatment of women with force is defined as violence. It was indicated that men should not consider women as individuals who must bear a child. During the discussions, respondents focused on surrogate mothers and adoption, as well as the association feelings.

“Going to the doctor continuously – I mean if there is a treatment for the infertility, it is performed and finished – but going to the doctor continuously is completely abusive.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle – High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“In my opinion, you don’t have to bear children in order to be a mother. When you love and care for a child, then you love that child in all aspects. I mean, motherhood is not merely giving birth.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle – High Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

During the discussion at the middle socio-economic level, it was stated that the problem may be due to the man or from the woman. There should not be pressure on women. It was also stated that a couple may adopt a child when this is the case.

“Not being able to bear a child is not something a woman does voluntarily. There are men who insult women because of this. There are a lot of them really. I think this is terribly wrong.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“Even if the problem is about the man, they lay the burden on the woman.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

During the discussion at the low socio-economic level, respondents said that it was unacceptable that the woman would be continuously taken to the doctor. The concept of marriage should be regarded from a much broader perspective. However, it was also stated that having children is a requirement for the family.

Ankara Province

Respondents adopted the view that the woman and the man should solve this issue through dialogue and that a woman should have the right to decide on issues regarding her own body. There were also views that if the woman cannot bear a child, the couple may adopt. At the middle and low socio-economic levels, an opinion was also stated that the woman could be convinced of the need for infertility treatment to be able have a child, although less frequently.



Erzurum Province

This situation was defined as violence during the discussions at middle and high socio-economic levels. At the low socio-economic level, however, respondents stated that a woman should bear a child and the man should support her in this regard; this was not included within the scope of violence. However, it was suggested that the woman is not to be blamed, and other solutions should be sought if she cannot bear a child. Second wives are considered normal in their province. The woman should seek a solution for having children if she loves the man. One participant stated that a child may also be adopted from an orphanage.

4.a.i.2. Discussions With Male Students

Group discussions were conducted in the high schools selected for the survey in line with the sampling in the three provinces. In the Provinces of Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın, 21, 22 and 24 students, respectively, and 67 in total volunteered to participate in the group discussions. Groups ranged between six to eight students. Table 6 presents the number of male students who participated in group discussions by provinces and by socio-economic levels.

Table 6: Distribution of the numbers of male students interviewed in high schools, by province

Provinces	Low Socio-Economic Level	Middle Socio-Economic Level	High Socio-Economic Level	Total
Ankara	6	7	8	21
Erzurum	8	6	8	22
Aydın	8	0	16	24
Total	22	13	32	67

The analyses of the opinions expressed by students in the discussion groups are provided under sub-headings below.

Definition of the Family, Roles of Women and Men in the Family

In defining domestic violence against women, students were initially asked about how they evaluated the roles of women and men in the family.

In addition to the literal definition of the 'family', male students defined this concept as the social institution where basic education is provided to the child. Their definition was developed as "an environment embracing the feelings of happiness, trust, cooperation, frankness, solidarity and support". In Erzurum Province, the 'nuclear' and 'extended' family were also mentioned. In Aydın, students emphasized that being part of a family is a very important responsibility.



“Family is the most important element that prepares the young generation or individuals like us for the future and – how should I put it— ensures that we are ready for the future through culture and everything.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“In my opinion, family is not merely a unit including the mother, the father and the children. Family consists in individuals who value each other and watch out for each other – it is those individuals one trusts the most.”

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

During the discussions regarding the roles of men and women in the family, respondents said that the mother is responsible for keeping the household in order and caring for the children, and the man is responsible for working at an income-generating job. In all the three provinces, male adolescents talked about responsibility sharing in their families, giving examples from their own family and lives of families in their surroundings:

- In Aydın Province, there was a consensus that, while it is the mother who is mainly responsible in the household, women should share their responsibilities with men because they have started to take a more active part in the working life, and this should be regarded as normal.
- In Ankara Province, respondents at the high socio-economic level stated that the responsibilities of the household are now starting to be shared by the family members as a result of the active participation of women in the working life by increasing their educational level, while respondents at middle and low socio-economic levels generally stated that the father is the authority in the family and the primary family member. In Ankara Province, respondents stated that the daughter was responsible for helping her mother. During the discussions at the low socio-economic level, respondents said that if the roles of fathers and mother were completely reversed, children would have difficulty in taking them as models.
- In Erzurum Province, on the other hand, family rules are stricter. Within the scope of the definition of the family, the role of the father was also defined and he was considered the head of the family. The father was defined as the member who brings income to the family, and the mother as being responsible for ensuring order in the house, taking care of the children, and teaching them the customs and traditions. In addition, during the discussions at the middle and low socio-economic levels, respondents stated that if the mother is working at an income-generating job, then the father should share the responsibility of the housework. However, especially during the discussions at the high socio-economic level,



it was striking that a father doing housework was deemed unacceptable and respondents openly stated that they wished to continue what they learned in their families. Again in this group, the qualities of the region were manifest and respondents mentioned that they were aware that the situation was different in the West. Respondents also stated that children should help their mothers.

“Let me put it this way. If the mother is a housewife, then, in my opinion, it is the woman who should be doing the housework such as cleaning, and dish washing. However, if both work, they should share the housework, and the man can cook when necessary.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“In olden days it was different, maybe, but currently men and women do similar work. Women started to participate more in society.”

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“If we were talking about 30 years ago, then we would say that the father works and the mother takes care of the house and the children go to school. However, as society has changed, women are also working.”

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

“The father has to earn a living for the family... maybe the mother is also working and children go to school. All come together at home in the evening and the mother feeds them all.”

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“... I think the family is actually like a small state... if we are to examine our own identity, for example, men used to be regarded as the pillars of the family in Central Asia... I am a bit conservative... I mean I believe that the man has to manage the family. Why do I think this way? The man earns the living, brings home food to the family and hands it over to the mother. The mother is responsible for the management of the house and the bringing up of the children. If both the father and the mother work outside the home, as we mentioned earlier, then there are shortfalls in the education and development of children. In my opinion, the mother raises the children in line with their own customs and traditions, and feeds them, and the father protects the children and watches over them. These are their responsibilities. When I said that the father is responsible for the management of the family – I told you, it’s just as in the state metaphor...”

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“Every member in the family should do what s/he can. For example, a female member should not go to pay the water bill. Men should do the chores they should do and women should do the tasks they should do.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)



“It is a bit of a problem when a woman goes to pay the water bill. If she goes with male accompaniment, then she would not be looked down on. In the East, a woman doing the shopping, going to the market and everything is not welcomed. I don’t know how the situation is in the West.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

The position of women and men in society

During the discussions on women’s level in society, opinions differed in the provinces. The respondents in the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province emphasized that women’s role in ensuring order in the house and men’s role in managing the family are very important. They stated that these female qualities are highly important in the business world and would provide women with great success. It was nevertheless stated that women do not have these rights in all parts of the country (that there is a problem in the Southeastern Region in this sense) and that it is important to change men’s opinions on this issue. During these conversations, the difficulties of mothers attending universities, and women who are active in politics were mentioned. It was indicated that women living in other regions are more free, using an example that they can vote for the political party of their choice. It has also been indicated that women who have say in society live in different family structures. In Aydın, in particular, the opinion prevailed that women will be able to practise several professions through changing society’s perspective:

“For example, if and when women take part in business world or social life, men directly say that they are trying to do a man’s job. They say that women do not understand business, that they had better sit at home and look after the children. This has changed in time, though.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“Now, as my friend put it, it was all different previously. Women were regarded differently by everyone, but currently society is changing even if slowly. Women have started to take part in everything – and in some areas, women are superior and more successful than men. When I say superior, I mean their success in a given business. They may be more successful than men in certain areas. If I am to give an example from my neighbourhood, the Mayor of Aydın is a woman. Things have started to change for women. We see that women are into education and politics and are everywhere now. They have started to take a greater role in sports and journalism, as well. I don’t know how this will proceed in the coming future, but it looks as if it will increase.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



In Ankara and Erzurum Provinces, it was generally believed that women should not work at income-generating jobs outside the home. In Ankara, especially at the low socio-economic level, it was considered very important – in terms of raising the children – that women stay at home and take control of the children. In Erzurum, the predominant view was that if the mother works, then the order in the household would be negatively affected. In Erzurum, it was the group from the high socio-economic level that supported mothers working outside the home, but some respondents within this group emphasized that it should be taken into consideration that family responsibilities should come before the work life.

“My mother used to work, but she isn’t working now. But it wasn’t good when she was working. I mean... it’s different when your mother is at home, you feel different, you rely on your mother...”
(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

In all three provinces, the prevailing opinion was that women cannot be able to perform all kinds of jobs. The selection of the type of job would be very important because women’s physical strength is low and because certain types of behaviour are unacceptable in society. In addition, there was a general opinion that women would not be able to stay outside the home until late at night and that they would get harmed. In Erzurum Province, on the other hand, it was underlined that women should work in professions that would suit her emotional nature as well as physical strength. Respondents here stated that women should work in professions where they would not meet many people and be psychological and socially constrained. During the discussions at the low socio-economic level in Erzurum, respondents stated that men should choose professions that require discipline, authority, physical strength and a businesslike mindset, and that women would be unsuccessful in these areas. In addition, in Erzurum, the predominant opinion was that women should work in professions that would not affect their family responsibilities.

“... for example, as part of her job, she would go into a restaurant or go somewhere in the middle of the night and, just because she is a women, they [society] will look at her in a different way and she will be uneasy and embarrassed – this is the reason...”
(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

“For example, a woman cannot protect herself.”
(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

“A woman should work, but if a man fulfills all the needs of a family, there would be no need for the woman to work. In fact, the reason for a woman to work would either be that she has advanced so much in her education and she would automatically do whatever her education



requires, or else, that she is obliged to bring her family additional income to contribute to her family's living. In addition, if the man is able to meet all his family's requirements... but then, it all begins in the family: if the family provides a proper initial education, then it is continued in the educational institutions; if the individual becomes a conscious and educated person, he would turn out to be a man with a good profession and an adequate job to pay all of his family's expenses; he would assume the responsibility of his family and then the woman would not have to... we all must make sacrifices, of course – if we think of our future, we have to act accordingly, and we shouldn't make the woman work – and not apply pressure, so as not to drag her away from the family.”

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“In my opinion, the most appropriate profession for a woman is being a teacher, in the physical sense I mean... Because, I don't know, it should be due to her nature, but a woman's teachings are better and have a greater impact, I believe. A woman may not be able to do a job that a man does, and a man may not be able to do a job that a woman does – these differences might narrow at some point... But the thing is a woman should not work in heavy-duty jobs. What I mean by heavy-duty, for example, is that a woman should work maximum 5-6 hours a day, she shouldn't work as much as a man because she has to go home and take care of her children, talk to her children, because in my opinion the teacher in the family is the mother – she is the one who teaches everything to the child. Therefore, a mother should first train her child, teach him/her things, do much more work at home. She can work during her remaining time, but not as much as the man. But a man can work more. A man sometimes stays at work for days and can also go away for business purposes, but if the woman does the same, then there may be trouble in the family. Therefore, I believe it is better for women to take less part in business world.”

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Adolescent men held a positive opinion regarding women's taking part in the business world in Aydın, while a more conservative point of view was dominant in Erzurum and Ankara. However, in terms of the work to be carried out, the issue of women's physical nature is raised in all the provinces. The predominant opinion that women should take part in the social life in certain professional fields suggests a conservative approach in Erzurum.

Opinions on the definition and types of domestic violence against women

Violence was defined as showing one's strength over someone. It has also been explained as reflecting a problem with someone or one's anger towards someone on the weaker individual. In Ankara, it was defined as violation of women's rights.



Examples of physical violence were: squeezing the arm, fighting, beating, throwing slippers, extinguishing a cigarette on the hand, applying brute force, and killing. Psychological violence includes insults, threats, casting an evil look, using certain gestures, speaking roughly, restricting the other's actions, repressing, behaving disrespectfully, humiliating, belittling, ridiculing, scolding, applying continuous pressure, and breaking another's heart. 'Scolding' was not considered as violence by some of the respondents. During the discussions in Aydın at the low socio-economic level, it was stated that expressions that humiliate women also involve violence:

"What do you mean by scolding? It may be that which causes grief or perhaps raising one's voice when speaking, which is not ordinary behaviour. Basically, even the expression 'this meal is not tasty' can start a fight."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"I can't imagine how this can be – she does not have power or anyone standing behind her, whereas the man has power. Then, the opposing party is the oppressed party and she cannot object or even if she does, she would see that her strength is not enough and would eventually stop resisting – and then it may seem as if she is letting this happen."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Physical violence is not merely about the physical signs of beating. How shall I put it – it may be due to psychological damage to the individual."

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

At the high socio-economic level, economic violence was defined as applying pressure on someone and restricting one's expenditures, whereas at the low socio-economic level, it was defined as not giving money.

The explanations regarding sexual violence are provided below, by province:

- During the discussion at high socio-economic level in Aydın Province, some respondents did not know about sexual violence and others exemplified it as insults, harassments, rape, undesired touching and contact.
- In Ankara, forcing a woman to have sexual intercourse when she does not want it was considered 'rape'. However, some respondents in the group were not sure about this as being defined as rape in case the couple in question is married. In this group, jealousy was also included within the scope of sexual violence. During the discussion at the middle socio-economic level in Ankara, respondents emphasized that the man and the woman should have mutual desire for sexuality. It was underlined that it would be acceptable if a



woman refuses sex a few times. However, if this continues, it would cause distress for the man and exceed the limits of acceptance.

- During the discussions at the middle socio-economic level in Erzurum Province, insults were not accepted as sexual harassment. The respondents believed that for an act to be considered sexual violence, it must involve physical contact. They stated that women wearing immodest clothes can be construed as a certain attitude towards men, who consider it as natural to look at such women. These women were engaged in improper acts and men acted impudently.

Differences were observed in the perception of sexual violence between the provinces. In Aydın, it was acknowledged that any sexual expression towards women would be considered as violence. In addition, some respondents in the discussion in Ankara and Erzurum considered it unacceptable that sexual intercourse should not occur when the woman does not want it; this suggests their view that mutual desire was not deemed important. Possibly, the male adolescents believed that they would assume the decision-making role regarding sexual intercourse in their marriages. It is considered that this point of view is adopted as a result of their social environments' social and cultural influences. A male-dominant structure is supported in particular in the provinces of Ankara and Erzurum:

"... there are different types of sexual harassment: if a man looks at a woman, she might get annoyed; if he says something, speaks disrespectfully her, she would again be annoyed, but then there's physical harassment... By merely looking at a woman, one can make her uncomfortable and annoyed, therefore merely looking may be considered [harassment], as well, I guess."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"M⁴-1: Everyone wants to look good, so they dress up beautifully. But a man does not perceive it thus, he thinks of negatives things.

M-2: Let's say a woman is walking in the street. She is all covered up, even her hair is covered. No one would think anything negative about her. To the contrary, they would think that she is highly chaste. But a man seeing the opposite of this on the street may say some things.

M-3: Nowadays, men look more at veiled women than the uncovered ones."

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

Causes of domestic violence against women

The adolescents expressed the following views regarding their experiences of violence:

- The respondents at the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province stated that no such act occurred in their families and in their immediate surroundings. However, they emphasized that such acts occur very frequent in society.

4 The numbers assigned signify different persons.



- During the discussions at the low socio-economic level in Ankara Province, respondents indicated that these violent acts were “not very frequent”. However, they stated that violence was experienced in closed settings in families and was not revealed.
- During the discussions at the low socio-economic level In Erzurum Province, respondents stated that such acts were not experienced. At the middle socio-economic level, some respondents indicated that occasional slaps on the face and beating should not be considered violence.

In all of the three provinces, adolescents believed that these incidents of violence were an important problem of society, but that they had not personally experienced them in their social circles. Different remarks based on the different criteria taken into consideration upon the selection of the provinces were expected; remarks of adolescents that there was no violence in their surroundings suggest that violence was normalized and accepted.

A man’s personality

In all of the three provinces, respondents stated that the man feels he has the right to commit violence against his wife due to his authoritarian personality. Since the expression “men regard women as their commodity” was used by respondents during the two focus group discussions in the provinces of Aydın and Ankara suggests that this view is predominant among men in society. There were even remarks to suggest that this view even begins prior to the marriage. Male adolescents indicated that they witnessed men defending themselves in this way.

During the discussions at the middle and low socio-economic levels in Ankara, it was underlined that such points of view and behaviour of men are accepted by society. It was stated that society accepts violence against women, and that the man is accepted among his friends and not outcast, and also that perpetrators of violence feel pride in showing each other their strength.

In addition, during the discussions at the high socio-economic level In Erzurum Province, it was maintained that violence against women is unjust, that men are created stronger and the fact that they act violently against women when they should protect them is “injustice”. It was indicated that even if a woman cheats on a man, the man should not commit violence against her but instead wish her to “be left to God’s judgment”. During this discussion, the general opinion was that men were created stronger than women, that women should obey them and that men should protect them:

“... For example, if God had created men and women equal, they would be able to be violent towards each other, but God created women weaker than men. I believe that men perpetrating violence against women when in fact they should protect them is unjust. I don’t think that a husband and a wife with nearly equal strength would fight with each other, because the man would be afraid to apply force to his wife. I believe the reason for violence is that men feel



stronger than women and this means injustice. Also, children of families experiencing domestic violence are deeply affected – this can be observed by everyone..."

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"Why is it so that it's always men who beat women? Because the man is stronger, he feels the urge to show it and this means that he is abusing his power and it's a shame."

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"... if they have the same strength, I would understand, but it is a man – it would not suit manhood! If I hit someone weak, it won't solve the issue; she would suffer and I would gain nothing but feel remorse. Therefore, a man should always use his brain, the woman should also use her brain and do what is in her power so that such things do not occur."

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

During the discussions at middle socio-economic level in Ankara Province, the cause for violent actions against women was cited as the man's sick psyche, hormonal instability, and his failure to handle stress and to control his anger. Again in this group, it was maintained that domestic violence against women occurred more frequently in families at the low socio-economic level. Another cause for acts of violence against women was cited as men's alcohol consumption.

The status of women

The low level of women's in the family and in society with respect to that of men was cited as the reason for their being victim of violence. During the discussions at the low socio-economic level in Aydin Province, respondents emphasized that violence against women weakens them. It was maintained that women's economic weakness make women's disadvantaged level even more severe. If the initial reaction given by a woman to an act of violence is acceptance, this is taken as an indication of her acceptance of it. It has also been stated that a woman's lack of an immediate support circle makes it difficult for her to resist violence and even increases it. Respondents stated that, when the woman is separated from her husband, she becomes obliged to stay in contact with him if she has children, which causes the violence to continue. It was emphasized that, through the knock-on effect of these incidents, the woman becomes victim of violence throughout her life. Respondents stated that even when a woman reports incidents of violence the police or a court issues a restraining order, the violence continues. It was underlined during the discussions, however, that the level of violence is not as high in cases where the woman has a job.

Respondents at the low socio-economic level stated that men forcefully keep women under control so as to increasing their weaknesses and their own strength. Examples given of such behaviour were



banning women from leaving the house even to visit her family, for various reasons including jealousy, not trusting their wives and feeling that their relationship with their wives could be threatened.

Disapproving women's behaviour

Respondents consider the reasons for women being victim of violence as their failure to fulfill their family responsibilities, aggressive attitudes and jealousy. In Erzurum, respondents stated that women deserve violence due to their personalities or their intervention in money matters, which are men's responsibilities. Other reasons they provided were, "a man may become angry at a woman who did not complete the housework because she went out during the day" and "a woman who does not greet her husband in a positive manner".

It was stated that women's failure to fulfill their responsibilities or their intervening in men's affairs may cause men to become angry, strain their patience and eventually cause acts of violence. It was maintained that, in these circumstances, a warning slap on the woman's face would be normal. It is expected of women that they should "assume a humble attitude in case of such incidents in order to prevent these acts of violence." This suggests that it is accepted that when women do not act as men want them to act, they may be warned through acts of violence.

"... now, I don't know... a woman should not interfere in a man's business... For example, let's say they want to apply for a loan from the bank. I sometimes witness such things and I get angry at women – you know, men deal with such things, it is money you know. And then..."

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"I mean if the woman is not right, the man shows patience to a certain extent, then the patience ends..."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"There may be instances where she deserves it – for example, she does not understand what you're saying. For example, you cannot explain something to an animal and you use force – there are such people who... animals cannot think, and there are also some people who cannot think, they are no different than animals, and you have to use force on them."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"For example, a man may sometimes be nervous when he comes from work. The woman should be able to understand him and it's better that she assumes a humble attitude."

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)



Acts of domestic violence against women in case a woman gets involved with another man are accepted as normal and ordinary. Even in Aydin Province where acts of violence against women are generally not accepted, a man committing an act of violence in such a situation is considered justified. It was stated that such a situation is totally unacceptable and the reason for violence is legitimate. During the discussions, it was striking that a woman was considered an individual in her own right. There were even remarks that a woman marrying another man after becoming divorced may be the cause of violence.

“The only violence I understand is caused by reasons related to honour. For both a woman and a man... If the man has committed such an act, I mean if he was together with another woman, the woman would rightfully act violently – she can do anything. And the man, as long as he does not go too far, if he has reached the very end of his patience... For example, if I myself live through such an incident, the most I would do would be the slap her in the face. Really, if there is an issue regarding honour, there would be beating – I would never go any further... (Interviewer: What about sexual intercourse with another person?) The same... In case of any such thing, I mean only in that sense... and what I mean by beating is a slap or something. I really would not be able to stand an issue regarding honour – personally speaking... (Another participant: Me either.) I consider this rightful only in this issue – only a slap or something, never anything further.”

(Aydin, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Another unacceptable behaviour of women was raised with respect to the selection of outfits. It was maintained in Ankara and in Erzurum that especially girls were labelled as “free and easy girls dressed to kill”, which starts with their style of dress and ends up with their being labelled as a “streetwalker”. This suggests that women are obliged to obey certain dress codes and behaviour – not only at home but also in society. A few respondents underlined that fathers play a significant role in raising young girls and that certain behaviour must be taught to them, from going out to selecting outfits.

Another point of view expressed at the high socio-economic level in Ankara was that a man cheating on his wife is an act of violence. In this group, jealousy of a woman was also cited as a cause for violence.

The Marriage Structure

It was raised during discussions that the initial stage of a marriage was very important in order for the relationship between the man and the woman to develop positively. In Ankara, respondents cited early marriage, and the couple being unprepared for it among causes of violence. During the discussion at the low socio-economic level, it was underlined that women are treated as marriage property and not as partners. It was also indicated here that women’s participation in the business world would allow her to be in a better position to choose her spouse and that she would be able to marry the man of her choice. It was stated that girls who do not earn an income and who stay home could choose their



spouses from among the proposals they receive and that they might marry someone they do not get along well with. At the low socio-economic level in Aydin Province, respondents described the situation when women and men do not know each other well.

"... I think it may be due to the fact that they are not aware of each other's sensitivities and weaknesses. If one of them intentionally does something that drives the other crazy, this may cause violence, as well... Not knowing the person well... Getting along with someone, as they say... If this is not done, violence may arise."

(Aydin, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

It was considered that if a man's love for his partner ends, then he might express himself through violence. It was also indicated that men are violent because they cannot leave their families and abandon their responsibilities.

Men's unemployment was also cited among the causes of violence. This may cause him stress and thus increase his violent behaviour. In this group, i.e. the low socio economic in Aydin Province, women's excessive expenditures were also cited among the causes of violence.

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level in Aydin Province, it was indicated that there may be violence in many families but that it was irrelevant with respect to the level of education. Respondents believed that there was equal violence in families with high levels of education.

"I mean, I think [violence] is irrelevant to education – it rather relates to the individual's nature. Since there are men who are educated, who are graduates of several universities, yet who beat their wives, who as my friend put it 'raise their hands against their wives', there are also those with little or no education who are perfectly nice to their wives. This is not relevant to education, I believe – it's about being humane."

(Aydin, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

However, in Ankara, lack of education was cited among the causes of violence. Since some respondents stated that men with high educational levels also committed violence, the group eventually arrived at the common view that "the attitudes and behaviour set by the family" were very important. If there is violence in a family, children may take this as a model and be violent in the future.

The family plays an important role in influencing their children in terms of developing certain attitudes towards violent incidents. Children practise what they have learned from their families when solving problems they encounter. It was indicated that this learning process continues at school.



Social norms and values

Customs and traditions that are important in establishing the roles of men and women in society were also cited among the causes of violence. During the discussions in Aydın Province, respondents stated that violence was acceptable due to customs, traditions, moral laws and chastity-related issues. Social and cultural patterns closely affect the relationships of men and women. Incidents of violence against women are observed more frequently in eastern Anatolia and less frequently in Western Anatolia. The reason cited was the different social and cultural patterns of the regions. However, some respondents insisted that violence against women was also observed frequently in the western Anatolia region. In response to the question as to why violence was less frequently observed in western Anatolia, respondents replied that in this part of the country, a man who commits violence would not be tolerated and would feel social pressure.

“In my opinion, it is inevitable in Turkey. I mean, no, this will not change 180 degrees... We have to get to the bottom of the issue... Our roots are traced to Central Asia; we cannot be English gentlemen.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“Because people are more educated and cultivated in the Aegean region of Turkey or around that area, for example... but then there are moral laws there, too. There is pressure on people... They may fail to seek their rights. But then here, for example, there isn't much pressure on women. Even if there is, society would react to the individuals who are applying such pressure. Therefore, it is not very prevalent over here. But it's natural there... Therefore, I do not think it would change over there. It is difficult to radically change tradition.”

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

During the discussion at high socio-economic level In Erzurum Province, it was stated that there used to be no violence against women in the olden times, that values have been lost and that violence has increased together with Westernization.

“This is my opinion, because we used to be believers before; some of us still are, but there are also people who adapt themselves to the changing world. There are people who use violence because their morality has degenerated. Society should not be this way. There will definitely be regression after some point, but it is very painful that we are discussing this today.”

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

At the low socio-economic level in Ankara, it was stated during the discussion on the change in society that the violence in TV programmes cause society to accept and imitate acts of violence.



The Emotions of Men, Women and Children in Response to Violence

Women's emotions

In Aydın Province, respondents brought up women's emotions the most, as discussed below.

Respondents mentioned that women who become victims of domestic violence would suffer badly and feel weary of life; they would feel like an object, oppressed and small. The women would be affected at a deeper level because they are more fragile and sensitive than men.

Some respondents stated that they would lose trust in men.

Women who are victim of violence may commit violence against their children; i.e. they become both the victim and the perpetrator:

"... I mean, the woman also commits violence – against her children – I witness that; she shouts at the child and wants the child to do things that he/she cannot do."

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

At the low socio-economic level in Aydın, some respondents stated that a woman who is victim of violence would think that her husband is right:

"She may also remain silent thinking, 'He's my husband, he can beat me...'"

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

During the discussions in Ankara, respondents believed that, since they were men, they could not adequately express how women feel after an incidence of violence. However, they indicated that women would feel bad and helpless, collapse psychologically and physically, and feel repressed.

Some of the respondents in Ankara emphasized that women's personalities and levels of strength would determine their feelings. A strong woman would resist and take hold of her life, but a weak woman would continue being repressed or return to her parents' house:

"This would change from person to person – for example, there are women who struggle and women who don't... a fragile woman would feel weak, return to her parents' house or that of her loved ones – In addition, a determined woman would stand on her feet."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

In addition, in Erzurum, respondents said that the woman could cry, be depressed and be hurt. They stressed that she may also become vengeful. The respondents stated that they would not be able to understand the feelings of a woman who suffered from rape.



Men's emotions

During the discussions in all the provinces, respondents stated that men who commit violence feel strong. A man could release his stress and relax by committing violence.

In Aydın Province, some of the respondents mentioned that men who commit violence may have psychological problems and that they would have mixed feelings. In Aydın, respondents used negative adjectives to describe men who commit violence such as “uncivilized” and “uneducated”. In general, they believed that men who commit violence would never apologize.

In Aydın Province, all respondents stated that they would never commit violence against a woman. In general, they believed that good-hearted men could not commit violence but if they exceptionally would, out of a flare of anger, they would then reconcile. Men's psychological level and their educational levels would affect their sense of regret. In Ankara, on the other hand, respondents believed that a man who loves his wife would apologize. In Erzurum, it was stated that some men could even commit suicide out of remorse, although they did not provide an explanation:

“Men are always dominant. The opinion that men are always superior is dominant in society. Now, okay, everyone accepts that violence against women is a bad thing, but for example, I would want to be superior when I argue with a person. Everyone would do the best he could in such a situation. The sense of dominance exists in everyone – whatever the issue is, even if it is minor, the sense of dominance is there.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

“Sometimes educated people also commit violence, but they may regret it afterwards. However, those with low levels of education do not feel very much regret. Feeling regretful depends on the person.”

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“He maybe be regretful and apologize. Maybe... he would say ‘it's good that I've beaten her’ and feel superior.”

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“He would either say ‘oh, I've released my stress!’ or would come home with flowers to ask for forgiveness.”

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)



Children's emotions

The feelings of sons in families living through domestic violence against women were examined. Most of the respondents believed that sons learn behaviour of their fathers and commit violence in their future lives. Some boys would be adversely affected by the violence that their mothers suffer and avoid getting married in the future in order not to act like their fathers, and girls would grow apart from men and avoid getting married in order not to suffer like their mothers.

"I would say that if a child witnesses his father perpetrating violence against his mother, he would try to do the same to his girlfriends and his wife. There are many such examples of it. For example, I once saw a boy slapping a girl on the face. The girl then left crying – it's ridiculous."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

It was stated that children who witness violence would become adversely affected psychologically and not want to return home. These children might grow away from their families and their homes, and start using drugs. It was indicated that, at the low socio-economic level, these children first become users and sellers, and, at the high socio-economic level, become users. It was emphasized that these children would suffer very badly, their academic performances would decline, they would drop out of school and not be successful in their lives.

Some respondents stated that children would grow away from their fathers and hate them, and protect their mothers in case of incidents of violence. Strikingly, in Aydın Province, a participant thought that the woman, i.e. the mother, was wrong, but that he would protect her anyway, which suggests the conflict between the strength of emotions felt towards the mother and the male personality.

"If there was a dispute, I would of course protect my mother since she is physically weaker... I would try to protect my mother even if she were wrong."

(The son of a civil servant currently residing Aydın, grown up in various provinces)

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

The age of the children also influences their reactions towards violence – at early ages, they are influenced more deeply, while at older ages, they try to prevent it. Respondents indicated also that children should be sent away a violent environment.

"If the child is young, s/he would be influenced more deeply than his/her older siblings. Verbal violence such as insulting or physical violence committed by his/her father would affect him/her very much. This childhood wound, as they say, may create very deep scars... I mean there would be consequences of it in later years, maybe in adult years."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)



"It is necessary to send children away from a violent environment because since these children would imitate what they see in their families, the least that could be done would be to send them away, even if the situation of their parents cannot be changed."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Prevention of Domestic Violence Against Women

In order to prevent Domestic violence against women;

Raising society's level of education

In all the three provinces, respondents stated that society's level of education should be raised. As the level of education increases, domestic violence decreases; therefore, the overall educational level of society should be elevated. At the high socio-economic level, respondents stated that both women and men should be informed on the issue and, at the middle socio-economic level, the university environment was considered a significant socialization environment.

"To men... educating them, to women... teaching them their rights... I mean even a minor incident of raising a hand against a woman may result in very different ways... the women could decide to stay with their husband even during the divorce process. But none of these is consciously done... their mothers and fathers would tell girls, 'he's your husband and he can do whatever he wants' in the old days – some women think this way. However, this is usually true for uneducated women – not for women who are educated and are able to stand on their feet."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

"Education can prevent this – I mean I know that uneducated people fight more, because they are ignorant. University graduates fight less, as far as I know."

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

In Erzurum, respondents also indicated that seminars and classes should be organized to raise awareness in society in order to prevent domestic violence against women. Education provided at early ages would eventually decrease incidents of violence. Empathy should be also develop within the scope of this education. Respondents stated that television and the Internet may also be used as part of such education efforts. It was indicated nevertheless that the effects of such interventions would be limited in special cases, such as in insanity.



In Aydın, respondents cited uneducated women's ignorance about the remedies that should be sought in resisting violence as a major problem. They suggested that the possibilities should be increased for women at the low social level to recur to civil society organizations and the television ads of women centres that women should be further disseminated.

"For example, violence committed by a man against a woman may be a result of his educational level. If he has only elementary school education, it may be irrelevant. If he has seen his own father doing it and his family has pampered him saying 'you're this and you're that, you are a man and you are superior', this may cause him to use force on women. Even in the most minor case, he would say, 'how come you don't do as I say' and... This is a result of the educational level, as well."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"There should at least be a place that women – those women who suffer from violence and cannot make themselves be heard – can reach, for example... She could see it advertised on television. Or hear it from someone – they would give her the telephone number and help her reach this place. They would try to find some solution. This may be a way to take measures to prevent violence."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Women's access to their rights

During the discussions in particular at the high socio-economic level in Aydın and Ankara Provinces, respondents raised the fact that women and men do not have equal social rights and stated that their social level should be equal. They provided the percentages of female and male congressmen as an example. This group also emphasized that if women knew their rights, they would better resist violence.

Respondents suggested that women and men should be taught their rights in order to raise awareness on the prevention of violence. The opinion was stated that women should be provided with opportunities to exercise their rights. Respondents suggested disseminated messages to society and men in particular that men cannot use force on women and that women have rights. The scope of such education should be "humanity education". Since the media is highly influential in Turkey, it was suggested that awareness-raising programmes involving effective messages be delivered through short and animated films, and discussions of relevant topics on TV, which would prove more influential than mere speeches on the issue. At the low socio-economic level, it was strongly emphasized that women should be informed of their rights. Respondents underlined the importance of information with respect to recurring to the police or seeking legal sanctions, and women's ability to defend their rights.



"I mean, as long as she is aware of her rights – what she can do – I mean, there are a lot of efforts aimed at violence against women – for example, Mor Çatı (Purple Roof) for women to seek refuge– they can even seek refuge at police stations if they cannot find any other place, but the police now... for example, there is a TV series called Arka Sokaklar (Back Streets). We see there that women go to the police station because they have become victim of violence, and then the police sends her back home saying, 'he [the husband] is the head of your house'. Then the man kills the woman and no one is able to explain the rights of a woman. But if the woman knows her rights..."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 10th grader)

It was suggested that there should also be life lessons at educational institutions.

"Men should also be taught these rights – because if it is the man who is committing violence, he does not have such a right to use violence."

(Aydın, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

"Many women in society still do not know their rights. They don't know what they can do. If they learned their rights at these places, then they would turn to these shelters when they becomes victim of violence. They would take action, and the other women around her would see this and think that they could do the same. In this way, violence would decrease."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Speeches and lessons on this issue may be given at schools, too, for example – there may at least one lesson. Life is not only about mathematics or literature."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

At the low socio-economic level in Ankara Province, groups placed great importance on women's participation in the work life. Respondents stated that this would increase awareness among women on their rights and ensure that men would pay more attention to their comportment.

Planning marriages and sustaining a healthy family life

In all of the provinces, respondents emphasized the importance of marriage planning and developed suggestions for a healthy start in marriages.

In Aydın, it was stated that unsuitable marriages may be prevented by choosing the right partner. During the discussions, respondents criticized the matrimony programmes on the television, drawing attention



to aged men marrying young women, and they indicated that such marriages had major drawbacks and were therefore unacceptable.

Drawbacks of marriages at early ages were an issue emphasized in all the three provinces. In Aydın and in Ankara, early marriages and dowries were criticized. In both provinces, respondents maintained that women's lives are determined through moral laws. It was stated that families do not regard their married daughters as part of their families and do not object to their being victim of violence.

"It's only that... our friend here said that the moral laws in the east should be terminated. There are moral laws in the East, but they also exist here. For example, a friend of mine from elementary school sent a message to me to tell me that she has an engagement ceremony at so and so, I believe it was on the 22nd of March, and that they would be pleased to see us all at the ceremony. I mean, how can she have the same thoughts and considerations with the person she is getting engaged with? I am very curious. She is 17 – the same age as me. She is from here, Yenipazar, and she had an engagement ceremony. Such things also happen here, not only in the East – it is very common here, too. I believe this should be prevented. Someone who is 17, who is referred to as a child or a teenager, and someone who is 28 or 29 or someone who is 25 would have very different thoughts and considerations – this is what I think. They cannot get along."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"They say you left in a bridal dress and you will come in shroud."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"The person who caused her to become that way should also be severely punished. I mean her father, the person who let her get married – someone from that family should also be punished. I cannot understand what kind of a heart, what kind of a conscious they have. You let your 15-year-old daughter get married and sleep in peace, and here I am trying to get my 25-year-old daughter married. How can you sleep when your daughter is being beaten? She is from your kin and blood – she is your child. But these people are so shameless, they consider this normal."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Tolerance. Getting married out of love. Not arranged marriage. Marriage of their own will."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"... and if her family does not stand by her... when the family does not want her. Because this is the way things are in some regions. When a girl leaves the house in the bridal dress, she would only return in shroud. This is also the case in our region but it is totally wrong. Because she is your daughter in the end..."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)



Pre-marital agreements and pre-marital counselling support were among the suggestions. In Ankara, respondents believed that pre-marital acquaintanceship would render the family structure more stable. In Erzurum, respondents emphasized the importance of couples getting acquainted with each other before marriage. Couples would get along better following a lengthy acquaintanceship period. In Erzurum, respondents mentioned that family training was important and that pre-marital counsel would ensure more positive behaviour of the mother and the father. It has also been suggested that a marriage certificate be granted following the completion of this counsel process. Respondents maintained that this would provide for a positive family environment and child development.

During the discussion in Ankara in particular, respondents emphasized the significance of the family structure and a positive relationship between the mother and the father. A positive family environment would be highly influential in ensuring a healthy development of the child and in preventing violence in his/her future life. Therefore, it is important to give the correct messages to children in the family environment. Children's awareness should be raised on the issue.

"This is about social acculturation. The child practices whatever s/he sees from the mother and the father. How shall I put it – it is actually about mutual respect. If the partners do not have mutual respect for each other – then it's over. Violence would be normal. If partners respect each other, there would not be violence in that family, and the marriage would proceed perfectly well."

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"I think the children of that family should be made aware – both the family and the children – of different aspects... They must see things from different perspectives. For example, they [the family centers/ government institutions dealing with the violence cases] may send the family away so that they can spend time together as a family... To seminars, for example... This would set an example. They may think of other ways for [the father] to spend time with his children and his wife."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Games and things for the family to share... For example, what was it, a word game or something – they say it's your turn now. They would slowly learn to respect each other's rights – they would learn solidarity."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

In Ankara Province, respondents at the low socio-economic level suggested that psychological counselling and support be provided to families with communication problems. Suggestions may be provided to the family for correcting their behaviour and for going out together as a family such as to the cinema, the theatre or a contest to share more experiences. It was emphasized that this would strengthen the communication between family members. It was also indicated that family members with psychological problems should definitely be treated.



Other suggestions

Alcohol consumption was deemed a problem and increasing alcohol prices would be a solution.

Poor economic conditions were considered a cause for domestic violence. However, during the discussions, respondents could not provide any suggestions to improve this condition.

It was indicated that religious education would support the positive relations in the family and prevent violence.

Responding to domestic violence against women

Communicating with the family

In Erzurum, respondents stated that, in case of an incident of violence against women, the woman should be contacted and the cause for violence should be eliminated. A man should be able to communicate with his partner without using force and violence would not be a solution. Relatives should definitely act as mediators and persuade the man to stop the violence.

During the discussions at the middle and high socio-economic levels, it was indicated that the victim of violence should rectify her relationship with her partner and that she has no other choice if she has children. It was emphasized that the woman should apologize if she is “guilty” anyway and that she should restore the positive environment in the family even if she is “not guilty”.

“I mean, a woman who was victim of violence should think, ‘how can I put things back in order, what should I do?’ She has to find a way... She should apologize if she is guilty... She should do it even if she is not...”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“As a result of a violent incident, usually it is the men who are constructive... women are usually destructive...”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“If this is inherent in the man’s nature... in the end one should think constructively in the first place – divorce should be considered the last option.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)



Supporting women in seeking their rights

During the discussions at the low socio-economic level in Aydın Province, it was stated that it is very difficult to go inside the family and that the woman should seek her rights herself.

"... I mean, in our society there is this belief that if we intervene in the family from the outside, [but] you can't do it, you can't intervene with family business, they are husband and wife and soon they would make up... Raising awareness helps at a certain extent. In the end, it is very difficult to change the essence of an individual. Therefore (M-2: She should seek her rights, in my opinion.) The violence victim should seek her rights. If she is victim of violence, this means that their marriage has been over a long time ago."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Intervention of security forces

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province, some of the respondents did not approve of the suggestion to call the police in case of violence against women. It was indicated that the police coming in the house during an incident of violence would be socially unacceptable and that such violence would continue as long as the woman continues living in that house. The general opinion of the respondents was that calling the police should be considered as a last resort, while the newly enacted laws in this respect were mentioned. Respondents maintained that the police already have so much to do and this would require an extra workforce since domestic violence is so widespread.

"In our society, how should I put it, the police are called as the last resort, I mean most people would not want the police to be called to the place they live in, I guess. Therefore, I don't suppose calling the police would be very clever."

(Aydın, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

"In the end, if a woman goes to the police, her husband will still beat her once she leaves the police station if he wants to beat her."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Protecting women

At the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province, respondents suggested that there should be associations and institutions where women could seek refuge. Communication would comfort them and make them feel that they are not alone, which would be very helpful in ensuring that they return to normal life.



“At least, this would ensure that the woman feels relaxed, talks about what has happened, which prevents her from feeling alone – these are very important. The woman should be able to share what has happened to her in order to be able to resume normal life.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Increasing punishments against male perpetrators

At high socio-economic level in Aydın Province, respondents indicated that the punishments given to men who commit violence against women are insufficient and that this is a major problem. It was maintained on the basis of observations that the police can stop domestic violence for a temporary period but that the man would continue perpetrating violence once she returns home.

“As mentioned, the punishments should definitely be dissuasive. We should view the issue from the emotional side, too: there is this woman, we see in a TV series, – I don’t know if she exists in real life – she is alone, she has nothing, no financial income, and she is married to this man. Then the woman cannot get divorced even if she wants to. I really don’t know what she should do in such a situation. Should she seek help from an association like Mor Çatı? I don’t know. Looking at this from her perspective, I guess I would also try to put up with it – especially if I have children. We should look at the case from her perspective. If the man supports her financially and if the woman has nothing... For example, I would go to my brother for help, if I had one. What would a woman who has no one do? It is very difficult when we look at the situation from their perspective. They would not know what to do. They have nothing. What would they do? She has to put up with it emotionally.”

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Supporting women in acquiring their economic freedom

In Aydın, respondents stated that, since it would not be possible for a victim of violence to return to her family, she would be condemned to violence due to her lack of economic independence. It was suggested that programmes at public education centres should be initiated to ensure that women may acquire a profession. It was emphasized that women should definitely be able to earn an income in order to be able to continue living alone.

“M-1: Wouldn’t she return to her husband’s home in the end?

M-2: As long as she does not have a profession.

M-3: How would she earn her living if she does not have a profession?”

(Aydın, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)



"A job would do it. I mean, a woman without a job, without money, would have to return to that house. If she has money, she can live by herself. Therefore, when the woman has money, she can leave the house in case she becomes victim of violence. But otherwise, even if she goes away for 1-2 weeks at the most, she has to eventually come back. If she has enough money to live by herself, she would be able to prevent violence."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Divorce

In Erzurum, it was emphasized that women who become victim of violence would have two choices: either to return to their parent's house or stay home. It was indicated that recently, women have opted to ruin their marriages and get divorced rapidly. Respondents stated that this should be the last option. It was also indicated that men do not prefer getting divorced because laws favour the rights of women and children, which affects men's financial standing to a great extent. Respondents maintained that men who get divorced get married again immediately or bring home a second wife.

Case Scenarios

Case Scenario 1: How do couples decide on having a child? Would it be possible if the man wants to and the woman does not? Would it be possible if the woman wants to and the man does not? Would this decision fall within the definition of committing violence? Why?

Aydın Province

In Aydın Province, respondents believed that this problem should be solved through dialogue between the partners. If this were not possible, the situation would get worse and would end up in divorce. During these discussions, respondents argued that such a decision would be very hard to make, that having a child is a major responsibility, that it requires assessing the family's financial situation, and that women has the right to decide on issues regarding their own body. Being forced to bear a child was evaluated as a violation of women's rights and a form of violence.

"It's the woman's right. The woman does not want a child. She does not have to bear a child because she is the wife of a man. If the woman does not want to, insisting would be disrespecting the woman. Therefore, it would be considered violence."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Of course it would be violence to force a person to do something that s/he does not want to do. If someone does something unwillingly, the result would not be so positive anyway."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)



Ankara Province

In all the discussions, respondents believed that this decision should be made together as a couple. At the middle and high socio-economic levels, respondents suggested that couples should get to know each other and mature together. However, at the low socio-economic level, it was indicated that the couple would have a child if the man wanted to. It was indicated that if the man did not want a child, there would definitely be a problem that would have to be solved, and, once solved, the couple would have a child. At the low socio-economic level, having a child with no financial resources to look after it would be considered violence against the child.

Erzurum Province

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, it was stated that being a father is very important and that every man wants to be a father. It was indicated that children are needed to constitute a family, but that having children may be postponed if the man has financial problems. In other words, the notion of 'not having children' was not accepted. Nevertheless, having children by force was defined as violence.

During the discussion at the low and middle socio-economic levels, it emerged that there should be a norm regarding whether or not a family should have a child. There would not be any problem as regards having a first child. Should the couple already have several children, then the decision as to whether or not to have another child should be made together.

"... I mean, what is the purpose of establishing a family? I mean, you should have a child – in a family, a child is a must. To this end, the families should find a mid-way, I mean I don't want to talk about this issue too much, I don't know what to say. The couple should talk it over and do something."

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"Well, let's say you can't have children... my wife cannot have children... it would be devastating – it's so sad."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"It's violence... if they are talking about their fifth child, it's okay, but then sometimes the woman (laughing at the same time) says that she would continue with her career... that she would grow in the business world... when they don't even have their first child... these things happen... the man would (laughing again) want a child... he would want to cuddle his child... but of course, after the fourth one, there must be a limit – although if the woman would not want the first child, it would be wrong, I guess."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)



"I mean in the end it's not good... it's enough if one of the partners wants it."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"It's not violence. Having a child is the most incontestable right of a father. If the woman says she does not want to have a child, then there is a problem with her."

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

Case Scenario 2: Certain methods may be used by the family in order not to have children. Some of them are used by women and some by men. What do you think about men deciding on the family planning method that a woman should use even if she disagrees? Would you consider this violence? Why?

Aydın Province

At the high socio-economic level, some respondents stated that this situation was one of violence, while others stated that it should be, rather, defined as pressure. The respondents concluded, nevertheless, that these problems should be discussed and that a marriage in which the partners cannot discuss such issues should not continue.

"They should talk about these things beforehand. If the woman does not want to have children, they should have talked about it before – it is ridiculous to discuss it after having got married."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"Well, this is a topic we do not have much familiarity with."

(Aydın, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

"Since all of this is pressure, I believe everyone here would accept it as violence."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Ankara Province

Participants did not accept this situation. The general opinion was that the man should not force the woman to use the family planning method and, if necessary, he should use one of the methods.

Erzurum Province

This situation was defined as violence. At the middle socio-economic level, however, some respondents felt that it should not be considered violence.



Case Scenario 3: During marriage, men and women have a sexual relationship. A woman has sexual intercourse with her husband even if she does not want it, when her husband wishes to. What is your opinion in this regard? Would this be an act of violence? Why??

Aydın Province

At the high socio-economic level, the discussion was based on the opinion that sexual relations must be part of the relationship between a married woman and man, and on the duration of a woman's sexual refusal. The woman's one-time rejection and the man's forceful sex were defined as violence. It was indicated, however, that in case of long-term refusal, it would not be defined as violence. Respondents associated the woman's long-term refusal with psychological problems and indicated that the man may fulfill his urge with another woman. It was stated that this issue should be discussed by the couple upon getting married. In addition, at the low socio-economic level, it was defined by respondents as rape.

"There is also this [to be considered]. Is the woman's reluctance short term? Her refusal – is it one day only, two days or is forever? If she totally refuses, the man is absolutely right in that case. The man would be right if the woman does not want sexual relations at all. But then the woman would not want it for that night only, then the man should not do anything by force – otherwise it would be considered violence."

(Aydın, Male, Upper-2 Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"The definition of rape is the same."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

"It falls within the category of violence if it is involuntary, even if the couple is married."

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Ankara Province

This situation was defined as violence at the high socio-economic level. However, the respondents stated that if it continues, the man may seek other women. At the middle socio-economic level, the woman's continued sexual refusal of the man was not acceptable. Respondents said that after a certain period, the man's desire should prevail.

"Now if the woman does not want to and the man wants to – if the man wants to, you should do it or else the man will go elsewhere."

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)



"The woman does not want to turn her husband down... this is still violence, I believe. She does not want to turn him down... she wants to please him and she does it unwillingly... thus, it is violence."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

"It's definitely not rape – the woman is his lawful spouse."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 11th grader)

Erzurum Province

This situation was defined as violence during the discussion at the high socio-economic level. The respondents stated that such issues should be resolved when they emerge. In addition, during the discussions at the middle and low socio-economic levels, it was stated that sex is obligatory in a marriage, and that refusal is unacceptable. At the low socio-economic level, the woman's reluctance to have sex was defined as violence against the man.

"If she refuses sexual relations once, then twice, the time passes by... then he gets divorced – that would be the man's right then."

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

"It's definitely not rape – the woman is his lawful spouse."

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 9th grader)

Case Scenario 4: A woman who does not have children is continuously taken to a doctor so that she can have a child. This woman fails to fulfill her intra-marital responsibilities. What do you think about these statements – can you explain this, please?

Aydın Province

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, the respondents stated that a woman who cannot bear a child should not marry a man who wants one. The woman should be approached with kindness and a solution may be found with advancements in medicine. It was emphasized that men would want to have children. It was stated that taking the woman to the doctor continuously and constantly focusing on this issue would adversely affect the marriage.

At the low socio-economic level, the respondents defined this as violence. The respondents emphasized the importance of having children in a marriage, stating that making a joint decision in this respect would be very important. It was suggested that the couple should try having a child and adopt one if they cannot have one of their own.



“Taking the woman continuously to the doctor is a form of violence in my opinion. It is pressure. It may be that the woman cannot have children due to various reasons and insisting too much would make her mentally depressed.”

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

“Of course, having children is one of the main goals of a marriage, but the real goal is for a man and a woman to be partners. A child is not a must in my opinion. They can have a child in the future.”

(Aydın, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Ankara Province

In Ankara Province, it was stated that bearing children is among a woman’s duties. The man should support the woman in this respect without putting pressure on her. At the high socio-economic level, some respondents stated that women should not be forced. At the low socio-economic level, on the other hand, it was stated that this task must be fulfilled and in some cases, a second wife could be a solution.

“The man should help the woman in this case – if the woman puts extra efforts into this, the man should help her.”

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

Erzurum Province

Here, it was considered that a child is a must in a marriage and the man should support the woman to solve this issue. During the discussion at the low socio-economic level, it was believed that the woman should not be forced, the process should follow its natural course and adopting a child would be a solution.

“In such a case, the man should motivate the woman and raise her morale.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 12th grader)

4.a.ii. Focus Group Discussions with Secondary School Students

4.a.ii.1. Female Students

Group discussions were conducted with secondary school students in the survey provinces in line with the sampling. A total of 72 students (24 each from the provinces of Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın) voluntarily participated in the discussion groups. All groups consisted of eight students each. The breakdown of female students who participated in the discussion groups by province and socio-economic level is shown in Table 7.



Table 7: Distribution of the numbers of female students interviewed in secondary schools, by province and socio-economic level

Provinces	Low Socio-Economic Level	Middle Socio-Economic Level	High Socio-Economic Level	Total
Ankara	8	8	8	24
Erzurum	8	8	8	24
Aydın	16	0	8	24
Total	32	16	24	72

The analyses of the students' opinions in the discussion groups are provided below.

Positions of Women and Men in the Family and in Society

During the discussion with female secondary school students, the definition of the family included the feelings of love, respect, devotion, sharing, trust, solidarity and support. During the discussion at the low socio-economic level in Ankara and in Erzurum, the definitions were raised of 'nuclear family' and 'extended family'. The fact that all groups believed in the importance of children being raised in a positive family environment emphasizes that the family is considered the most important social institution:

"If there is no compassion at home, a child would fail to show compassion to his/her own children when s/he grows up and gets married."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"... individuals who love and support each other unconditionally no matter what, in case of all kinds of adversities, who protect each other, who is one of your kin."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"To me, family means happiness forever. I mean, without a family, there would be no happiness. It means love. If you do not have a mother and a father, then there is no love."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

In examining the roles of men and women in the family, respondents in general stated that the mother was responsible for order in the home and caring for the children, and the father was responsible for bringing in an income by working outside the home. During the discussions in particular at the high socio-economic level in the provinces, it was stated that men should assume the responsibility of housework, as well, while at the low socio-economic level, it was stated that they should provide



support for chores that require physical strength. Respondents emphasized that housework should be shared in cases where the woman works outside at an income-generating job. In addition, during the discussion at the high socio-economic level in Ankara, the respondents stated that although Turkish society is patriarchal, this life style has been somewhat abandoned and that there is a transition to a participatory family structure.

"The mother takes care of the housework and the children, the father works, and the children do their homework, which is their primary responsibility, and they help their mother in some chores."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"Every family member has a separate responsibility. The mother takes care of the house if she is a housewife and takes care of her work if she has a profession. The father earns the family's living – he works and earns money. The children help their mother."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"The father has to earn the living for his family. The mother has to take care of the children, and the children have to succeed in life and have a profession."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Female students in general said that several jobs that are assumed by men in society can actually be undertaken by women and that others that require physical strength cannot. Respondents stated that women's responsibilities at home create an obstacle in terms of working at an income-generating job. Nevertheless, it was stated that women work at jobs that are suitable to their physical strength in order to contribute to the family income. As this issue was being discussed at the low socio-economic level in Erzurum Province, respondents stated that women in their environment mostly worked as secretaries, teachers, cleaners and tailors. In addition, in Aydın, it was stated that although men are able to work at certain jobs due to their physical strength, women are equally capable of being successful. During the discussion at the low socio-economic level in Ankara, female students whose mothers work as house cleaners provided class-based responses, and there was a debate over whether or not women who recur to domestic helpers were regarded as adequate women.

"F-1: A woman cannot do what a man can do. She cannot be a taxi driver or a bus driver.

F-2: I think these jobs would not suit women."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"For example, they say that fathers work and earn the living for the family, but mothers are also working. They do housework. My mother makes crystallized quartz work and needlework just



to be able to send us to school. She earns our pocket money and she says 'I would do anything just so that you can be educated.'

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

There was also a general opinion that men do not perform certain chores because they think themselves superior. Since women who do not work do not have economic independence, their right to speak out within the family decreases. It was indicated that a man does not own a woman because they are married, and that women should also have rights.

"Men are already... they say, 'Women have no power, we have more power' – they consider themselves superior..."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"Men are able to do anything if they want to, but they think themselves superior."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"Currently, most women feel they are more passive than men. However, this opinion should be disregarded because men cannot do women's jobs and women cannot do men's jobs..."

(Ankara, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"But they sometimes repress women and say, 'Why do you work? Stay at home?' their husbands say sit at home. Then they come and say, 'Why are you working – I am bringing you money.' Try to empathize."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Female secondary school students discussed how their mothers and fathers share roles in the family. While the roles of the mother and the father in society are defined in general terms, some respondents, particularly from the middle socio-economic level in the provinces, believed that the traditional family structure was dominant. At the high socio-economic level, women with a profession, and at the low socio-economic level, women's work outside the house is seen as contributions to the family income bring about sharing of the family responsibilities. These findings were obtained during the discussions at the high and low socio-economic levels, in particular in Aydın and Ankara Province, and at the low socio-economic level in Erzurum. As regards income-generating work, respondents focused on men's physical strength, his feelings of superiority, and the definition of gender-related jobs.



Definition of Violence

During the discussions in all three provinces, violence was accurately defined in terms of international definition of violence, while there were differences in terms of its types, examples and limits of acceptance.

One definition of violence provided in Aydın Province was “conflict of opinions and use of physical force”, which demonstrated how well the components of violence were understood. The group of female students in Aydın Province had the lowest level of tolerance regarding violence. Some of the acts of violence cited were: destroying furniture; hitting, punching, beating women; anger; raising hands against women; mockery; brutal behaviour; abusive speech; psychological pressure; banning, insulting, humiliating, hurting women; and harsh words. In Aydın Province, men taking a second wife was also defined as violence.

“In my opinion, violence is about behaving badly, using force instead of discussing an issue peacefully and opening a dialogue. It is not necessarily beating – using harsh words when talking to a person is also violence... like shouting.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

In Ankara, a participant defined violence as “a powerful person proving his/her superiority over someone”. While discussions focused on psychological and social violence at the middle socio-economic level, respondents at the low socio-economic level stated that all such acts should not be considered violence. The opinion at the low socio-economic level that women’s failure to fulfill their family duties justifies men’s violence suggests that violence is accepted:

“In my opinion, not all of these [incidents] are violence. Because there may be arguing and conflict in any family. In all families, there is some kind of a fight every day, but beating a woman very severely would be defined as violence – this is what I think.”

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“I think that excessively fragile women should change themselves a little when they get married, because if they get offended by every single word of the man, then the man will move out of his home. I would smash her face in if it were me (laughing). Nobody would stand a woman who constantly gets offended.”

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“We are always talking about the rights of women; now let’s talk about men’s rights a bit. If a woman does treat the man kindly when he comes home, if she does not prepare his meal, this is



wrong. Because the man deserves these, he is working and he expects a warm supper, a cup of tea when he comes home..."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

In Erzurum Province, the actions cited by the respondents as physical violence were more extreme acts such as kicking, killing, hanging, murder and stabbing. Actions cited as psychological and social violence were: force, pressure, prohibitions, insults, yelling, shouting, abusive language and slander, while some of the respondents did not consider "being angry" as an act of violence. During the discussion at the low socio-economic level in this province, respondents interpreted the custom of the marriage dowry as "selling girls". Respondents also provided examples of this from their environments.

Opinions on the Causes of Domestic Violence against Women through a Story

In this section, children in their early teens were asked their opinions regarding violence, and its effects through the presentation of a story in order not to upset them.

Part 1 of the Story:

"12-year-old is a 7th grader. She has two brothers, three and eight years old. Aylin's mother is a housewife and her father is self-employed, working with his brother. One day when Aylin and her eight-year-old brother returned from school, they saw that their mother was very upset. Their little brother was crying incessantly. Afterwards, when they saw their father, they realized that he was very angry.

The two children tried to learn what had happened at home that day. After seeing her [older] children to school, their mother went to their neighbour to have tea, taking their little brother along. Several other ladies also came to visit their neighbour and they sat together and chatted. After returning home, their mother fed their brother and put him to sleep, and afterwards, she tidied up the house and started cooking.

Their father did not want his wife to see and visit their neighbours, and he occasionally called her on the phone at home to check on her. That day, their father had called their mother on the phone to check on her again and, when nobody answered, he decided to come home early. When their father came home, he wanted his supper immediately, but their mother told him that supper was not ready yet. When their father asked her why she was late, she told him that she had gone to their neighbour's house to have tea and that she had done the other chores when she came back."



Opinions on the violent incident in the story

The aim here is to learn about adolescents' insights into such incidents. At the end of this story, comments were made, which differed by province and socio-economic level.

At the high socio-economic level in Aydin Province, respondents expected that the man would be angry at the woman, while stating that the woman also has rights and the man's behaviour was wrong. At the middle socio-economic level, it was expected that the man would react by getting angry and damaging the furniture in the room. In addition, at the low socio-economic level, it was expected that he would commit violence against the woman.

"Women were not created to do housework, she has rights, too."

(Aydin, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

In Ankara, it was projected that this situation would lead to a conflict and tension in the family since the man considers himself superior and expects his desires to be fulfilled. At the middle and low socio-economic levels, it was expected that this incident would continued with fighting and verbal violence:

"He may think that she does not value his opinions, because he said to her, "I told you not to go to our neighbour but you didn't listen to me and you went there" – He may think that they should overcome such problems. He may also have thought, "My word does not count in this house".

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"I think they must have had a fight at the end. Because all men are like this – when they are hungry, they think of going home and expect their meal to be ready. Of course, women are not obliged to do housework everyday – they can go visit their neighbours... I think they had a fight at the end."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Although in Erzurum the opinion prevailed that women have rights, respondents stated that the woman should not have behaved that way and that her husband had warned her. The respondents expected that the incident would end with quarrelling, beating and fighting. Some respondents explained that the reason for the incident might have been jealousy:

"I think that when the woman went her neighbour's despite her husband's warning, it was wrong to a certain extent. She should have known that there would be a problem again."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



"She has to abide by the rules if she wants peace in the home."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"If the woman had gone to visit her neighbour and had not prepared dinner, then the man would probably be violent and insult her. I would have done that."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Part 2 of the Story:

"Their father shouted at their mother: 'Didn't I tell you not to go to the neighbours?' As their mother was trying to explain why she was late in preparing the supper, their father told her that she should not talk back at him; he got angry and started beating their mother. Right then, their little brother woke up hearing all the noise and started crying. Their mother had also been beaten by their father the week before because she had called their grandmother on the phone without getting permission from her husband."

Interpretation of the Story

The reactions to the story in comments and explanations differed by province and socio-economic level.

In Aydın Province, at the high socio-economic level, respondents raised the concept of 'women's rights' in interpreting the incident; with regard to the violent ending of the story, the issue of 'women's rights' was most emphasized. On the other hand, there were also reactions that "the woman did not do anything to deserve violence" and "the woman did not do anything bad to her husband", which suggests the belief that some actions may deserve violence. This points to contradictory opinions and feelings of female students at their early stages of adolescence, that women have rights and also that violence is acceptable. In addition, at the middle and low socio-economic level, some respondents suggested that the man may be right, that the man did not trust the woman, and other respondents criticized this, but at the same time, indicated that there may be a reason for which the man did not want the woman to go visit her neighbour. It was stated that if the woman lives within the framework of the restrictions set by her husband, she would prevent herself from being victim of violence. This way of thinking suggests acceptance that the man's opinions and feelings dominate in the family and assumes that the woman should live within his restrictions:

"No, the man beats the woman because of something very minor, without any reason at all, although she has not done anything to him – he should not beat her."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)



"The aspect that attracted my attention the most was... he calls her every day to check on her. In my opinion, he should not do this, because he has married this woman and has children – why doesn't he trust the woman?"

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

In Aydın, respondents generally believed that violence is widespread and women cannot defend their rights. A woman who becomes victim of violence would not love her husband and withdraw from him; men who commit violence look down on their wives. Respondents emphasized that men who are reported on and suspended from home by court decision continue to commit violence against their wives. This suggests that the respondents feel that, although women have rights, men are dominant, and women fail to find a solution to violence.

"Even if they had got married out of love, due to the man's violence, the woman's love would soon end... I mean, how long can someone bear this? No matter how much you love the man, you cannot bear it..."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"That woman... if she has not married the man out of love – he is now using her as a caretaker, a maid – so that she would look after the children, cook, clean the house – that's how he uses her. She has the right to go out and have fun... she has the right..."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

In Aydın Province, respondents stated that the major causes of violence in society were drinking and gambling, as well as men spending the family income for their own pleasures. They believed that violent behaviour outside the family would cause further violence in the family.

At the high socio-economic level in Ankara Province, respondents stated that the couple should be able to discuss these issues, that women have social rights, and that children as well as the woman would be greatly upset and that this problem can only be resolved by getting divorced. At the middle socio-economic level, respondents maintained that violence was a major problem of society, based on the information they received from their circles and learned from the media, and that the state should intervene in this issue more. Boys who grow up in an environment of violence in their families would commit domestic violence against their wives in the future, and the girls would remain passive in the face of violence their mothers suffer and feel anxious that it would continue. At the low socio-economic level, respondents said that: the woman should definitely find a solution to this problem and seek help from institutions that combat violence against women; the man should be treated; and divorce should



be supported as another solution. In Ankara, at all of the three different socio-economic levels, the reactions of the respondents were similar. The reaction to violence was regarded as a social problem, with emphasis on women's rights and the roles of the state and the civil society. The principal theme of finding a solution for protecting women from violence was raised during the group discussions at all of the three levels.

"This must stop at once, no one is doing anything... there are a lot of women who are living through this [violence] – a lot of women who suffer [from violence] are among us... the husband changes the woman's mind regarding her decision... by bullying... we have to stop this as a society at large... it seems to me that the state acts irresponsibly..."

(Ankara, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"... daughters act passively [taking the example] from their mothers..."

(Ankara, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"Stop violence against women. The man has no excuse. The woman should go to that institution right away and she must get divorced at once."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

In Erzurum Province, a woman doing something that her husband does not approve of is considered "wrong". However, respondents recommended that the man should not have committed violence as a result of the incident. Respondents considered that there would be a reason why the father does not give her permission to visit the neighbour and that the underlying motive may be jealousy and lack of trust. While in Erzurum, violence against women is unaccepted in general, respondents stated that "the act of violence should definitely have a motive" based on the roles of the man and the woman in the family.

"I think the father is right, he has warned the mother..."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"The woman goes to the neighbour; the man is right because he has told her several times not to go – why does she go, why does she ignore the man? He is right in getting angry, but wrong in beating her. But his beating the woman because she has telephoned her mother is totally absurd. And that's it."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)



Children's Emotions

Girls in their early teens believed that children would be affected from domestic violence against women. They expressed the ways in which children would be affected based on the story, as well as their own life experiences.

Respondents believed that incidents of domestic violence against women would have adverse effects of the psychological development of the children. They stated that children living through such experiences would get upset, be scared, worry and cry. They also said that children would feel desperate. One of the respondents told the group that a friend had attempted committing suicide due to being depressed from her father's violence against her mother. In addition, in Erzurum Province, respondents suggested that the older children of the family should talk to their father about stopping his violence and solve issues through dialogue.

"For example, the child feels desperate when the incident is happening; feels that it has to be stopped but does not know how to do it – the child wants the violence to end but it is not in his/her power; the feeling is helplessness."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"I was staying at my sister's house. My friend's father was beating her mother, it was midnight, we heard sounds in the street, my sister and I went out on the balcony, her father was beating her mother in the street. I went near my father... she tried to take pills... she said she was tired of these acts of violence happening everyday... she said, 'Why is my mother like this, why is my father like this – at least they shouldn't do this near me'..."

(Ankara, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"... she can tell her father how upset they are and ask the parents to make peace and compromise, and stop using violence."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

In some of the discussion groups, there probably were children who had personally witnessed violence. These respondents stated that children become psychologically affected from violence, have bad memories and experience different feelings.

"When children witness... the beating... they remember, like me... they see that moment when they close their eyes – that's why they get nervous and hang themselves."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Respondents indicated that children would be afraid of their fathers whom they had trusted, and start disrespecting him. They also stated that they would start thinking that their father would start hurting them as well.



"They must have been afraid seeing their mother and their father quarrelling; they must have cried."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"They would not see their father as being right. They would be on their mother's side. They would start disrespecting their father because he beats their mother every day."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"The children would see how bad their father is. They would hate their father. I mean if he does it every day, every child would feel this way."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

It was stated that, in case of incidents of domestic violence against women, girls would empathize with their mothers and get upset, while boys would copy their father's behaviour. It was indicated that children would have to see a psychologist since this incident would adversely affect their psychological health. In Erzurum, it was stated that girls may run away from home because of this. The fact that it was not possible to go against the father, as suggested by the respondents, was an important indication of fathers' dominant role in the family in Erzurum.

"I mean, the boys... they feel a grudge against their father... because they cannot go and say anything to him... Of course, they feel bad for their mother. This causes girls to run away from home. Or divorce of the mother and the father... the family falling apart... violence is the cause of all."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"F-1: I always cry.

F-2: I bottle it up.

F-3: I remain on my mother's side. Sometimes I feel such a grudge against my father... when he gets angry at my mother... I feel full of vengeance... I feel like going and telling him to his face, but I can't – I hold back."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

It was stated that, in case of domestic violence against women, children would turn out to be perpetrators of violence in their future lives. Respondents indicated that children learn from the behaviour of their fathers and adopt it first within their circles of friends and in their own marriages. Children who learn these types of behaviour do not know how to solve this problem and act this way because they feel helpless. Nevertheless, it was also indicated that while there is a possibility that children would adopt their fathers' behaviour in the future, there is also the possibility that they would reject violence, since they had witnessed how much their mothers suffer from it.



"Both [expressions] 'as the twig is bent, so grows the tree' and 'a rotten apple spoils the barrel' – these children who grow up witnessing violence, would think that this is how it's done and would commit violence, too."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"They would see this as natural. They would think that it is normal, would lead to a equally violent future generation where domestic violence would continue. When children are growing up, they mustn't witness such incidents – because if they observe these, they would not stop, they would continue."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"I don't think they would copy violence. When they see their mother sad, they would grow closer to her. Because they would see their father hit their mother and their mother being sad. Then the children would grow closer to their mothers."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

It was also stated that the academic performances of the children would be adversely affected and that they would not be able to concentrate at school.

"In my opinion, at first, the child would withdraw from his/her father and then s/he would go to school, and during the class s/he would think of the incident of violence and... s/he would not be concentrate on the lesson... if s/he loves his/her mother really very much – of course, everyone loves their mother – s/he would start feeling a grudge and anger towards the father, if not hatred."

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"When s/he goes to school, s/he would not be able to stop thinking of his/her mother."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

Respondents stated that children get very upset by the incidents of domestic violence in their immediate surroundings and become very concerned about the possibility of their mother and their father getting divorced. It has also been stated that children are taken from their families and sent to orphanages in response to domestic violence. It was indicated that if there is violence against women in a family, there is also violence against the children in that family.

In Erzurum, it was stated that young children would be afraid in an environment of violence and that the older children should take the younger ones outside and try to ensure that they are not affected.



If they were the children in the story...

During the discussion, different opinions emerged when respondents were asked what they would do if they had been the children in the story.

During the discussions, respondents suggested solutions as to how the incident can be stopped. One main suggestion for an intervention was to stop the father. Different opinions were expressed regarding trying to stop the father. However, all groups stated that there would be the risk of getting hurt in case of trying this method of intervention. They said that they themselves could also get hurt trying to prevent their father from perpetrating violence. In addition, two more opinions were cited in this respect in Ankara. One opinion was to react violently against the father and another opinion was to acquiesce in order to prevent further damage. While the motive to stop the father was to prevent further suffering to the mother, the girls were scared because of the father's greater physical strength. Fighting violence with violence or acceptance were other opinions that give way to the dominance of violence.

"Aylin should have tried to stop her father when she arrived home. But then, if her father would beat her, then her mother... maybe she should have talked to her father when she came home, asking him what would he gain by doing this... She should have forced him to make peace with her mother. This way, she would have helped her mother. She should have ... she should have supported her... she should have asked her mother why she didn't challenge him, why she didn't resist him..."

(Ankara, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"In order to stop it, hmmm... for example, I would try to acquiesce in order to avoid a further fight because of me."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"Because she would be afraid of her father, she cannot do anything. If she were not afraid, she would have done whatever she could. If she had been a little older, she would save her mother altogether."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"When the fight is over, my mother cries and I would support her, telling her not to cry."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

In Aydin and Ankara Provinces,, some respondents indicated that children would get upset and cry, and tell their father to stop. Children might say that they cannot do their homework because they are affected by this incident and tell their parents to solve their problems through dialogue. In Aydin,



solving the problem through dialogue was discussed at length. In Erzurum, respondents did not bring up this type of intervention. Another moderate method suggested in Aydın was persuading the mother and father to seek psychological help together:

"F-1: She could have said, 'Dad, don't do this, I feel awful. My psychological well-being is becoming affected and I cannot do my homework.'

F-2: Both children could tell their mother and father that they are affected by their fighting.

F-3: Because I keep worrying about you at school, I cannot understand what the teacher is saying and I get low grades on the exams.

F-1: She [the girl in the story] could have said that she would report them [her mother and father] to the police."

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

In Erzurum, respondents suggested that the child may be inclined to escape from this environment. The girls said that they would think of leaving home and living with a relative. Respondents said that young children should be taken away from home in order that they not be affected. In several instances, the responsibility felt towards younger sisters and brothers was brought up, suggesting that children assume roles in the lives of their younger sisters and brothers.

In all of the three provinces, the family elders were indicated as the people to turn to for help. Respondents in Aydın said that they would call their relatives on their mother's side; in Ankara, from both their mother's and father's sides; and in Erzurum, mostly from their father's side. In Aydın, they did not want to seek the help of the neighbours, and would refrain from their telling other people of the incident. However, both in Ankara and in Erzurum, it was stated that help of neighbours may be sought. This shows that the family solidarity profile may differ by province. Children's perceptions differ in terms of people who may support them in such an incident.

"For example, there is never a fight at our home. Even if there is, there is my grandma, my aunt – they would stop it at once."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

In Aydın and Erzurum Province, female students mentioned guidance counsellors or classroom/guidance teachers as the people to turn to. Some students believed that they were able to share problems with their close friends. These two sources of help were scarcely mentioned during the discussions; they suggested seeking individual assistance rather than preventing or stopping violence. This assistance may take the form of sharing feelings and opinions, and seeking advice.

During the discussion in particular at the low socio-economic levels in Aydın and Ankara, turning associations working on domestic violence against women was also cited among the solutions. Respondents believed that these associations would protect women and support them.



In all the groups, respondents brought up the role of the police in case of domestic violence against women; calling the police was considered the last option. In certain groups, it was indicated that calling the police should be confidential. While it is positive that that the police can intervene in such incidents, there is concern that violence would grow when the police leaves the scene of the incident or after it is considered that the issue is solved.

“One should seek help from the family elders, because the friend may lead him/her to the wrong direction... since none of us has much information about this – thus, no matter how much one gets embarrassed or does not like it, s/he has to turn to a knowledgeable person such as the guidance counsellor.”

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

“I mean, society should not forget that a woman is also an individual; she, too, has a social life, she is also free – I mean, maybe we do not see it here but there are very bad people in other places and they should be helped. For example, the police forces may provide them protection and the woman should get divorced at once – she should not remain with him.”

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

“If I were in ...’s shoes, I would stop my father. If my father... if the fights continued, I would then seek help from my neighbours to call the police. I would call my friends, as well – I mean, the neighbours. I would have stopped the fight.”

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

In Ankara, some respondents indicated that they would not want to belong to a family that experiences continuous domestic violence, that they would feel concern for their mother who is continuously beaten and would want their parents to get divorced. At the low socio-economic level in Ankara, it was suggested that the mother should be comforted and the solution should be decided together with her. Again, in Ankara, at the middle socio-economic level, a protective approach was suggested in which the mother should be asked why she does not resist the violence and help should be sought from neighbours and the police. The fact that, in Ankara, respondents said that the support of the daughter could support the mother to resist violence.

“I would feel hatred towards my father at that moment... I would tell my mother to stand up straight and at the same time... if we go to the police, they would fine my father... and after he would pay it, he would get even angrier and maybe kill my mother. But I would seek protection from the police. Hmm... I would seek protection, I don’t know, I can’t think of anything further... or... they would get divorced.”

(Ankara, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)



“He who hurts my mother would hurt me too probably – because I would be on my mother’s side protecting her. Then, I would turn to the relevant authorities. I mean, we would not go anywhere, but my father would leave the house.”

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Observations in Society Regarding Domestic Violence

Aydın Province

During the discussion in Aydın Province at all the three socio-economic levels, respondents shared their viewpoints regarding violence. The fact that respondents related the stories in fine detail shows their sensitivity towards the issue. The girls who had witnessed such incidents expressed their feelings of pity and compassion. In addition, respondents who had friends and relatives who were victims violence indicated that they were reluctant about talking about it, fearing that it would increase the violence:

“.... but it was horrible, I felt so bad seeing the woman’s face... I felt so bad...”

(Aydın, Female, Middle-High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

It was indicated that during the incidents of violence in society that did not involve the use of weapons, witnesses could intervene. However, if weapons were involved, it would be better to seek help from the police so that they could intervene. The police could arrest the man. Women’s shelters could be used in case of such incidents. It was also mentioned that the perpetrator could be punished with a restraining order, fines or imprisonment. It was also noted that there were women who do not turn to anyone and who continue suffering from violence. During the discussions, one participant said that society was not sensitive enough in struggling with violence.

“If the incident was not too serious, the police would not be called, but if the fight involves sticks and all, then one should go to the police.”

(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

“Sometimes people do not call the police in order not to get in trouble and therefore they strengthen the perpetrator – they do not call the police.”

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“There is also such an inclination in society that, for example, everyone watches when a person is being robbed or when there is a fight – everyone only watches, doing nothing... society



should be encouraged to take action – this is something very wrong... it may be risky, but still 3 or 4 or 5 people can get together and stop the man and help the woman."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

During the discussions at the low and middle socio-economic levels, respondents indicated that there were associations combating violence against women, which strengthened the solidarity between women. It was emphasized that the support provided to women victims of violence by those who oppose it was very important and that the power of protest would thus be increased. It is also considered that the existence of institutions that protect women was valuable.

"Institutions that fight violence against women are being established, and women who get beaten, who become victim of violence, turn to these institutions – even if their husbands see them, the former cannot do anything because the women are protected. Also, people who support combating violence against women participate in the protest – people who support the women who are beaten and who are victim of violence come together and protest together..."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"Then the woman lives together with her husband and is beaten every day... she gets weary and leaves the house again, and she turns to the court this time and the court says, 'You cannot approach the woman within one metre', but the man does not abide by this and beats her every day..."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Respondents were knowledgeable on the types of solutions adopted in society in case of incidents of violence and the consequences. It emerged from their observations that they knew what to do in such cases.

Ankara Province

At the high socio-economic level, female students indicated that they did not observe domestic violence against women in their surroundings.

During the discussion at the middle socio-economic level, it emerged that respondents had witnessed several incidents of domestic violence involving their close relatives and in their social circles. They told the group about their experiences related to violence in their families, which resulted in divorce, psychological support provided to the man and the end of the violence. In addition, respondents mentioned that they had observed that during acts of violence at their neighbours' homes, men regard women as their property and defend what they believed to be their right to beat them. The neighbours still intervened and sought help from the police. Nevertheless, they indicated that the punishments



meted out to perpetrators of violence were not deterrent and therefore the men continued their violence. One of the respondents said that this issue is handled seriously abroad and told the group about a relative's experience in Germany. She said that men who commit violent acts against women in Germany are monitored by the state and punished severely in case they continue such acts.

During the discussions at the low socio-economic state, respondents stated that they had witnessed incidents of domestic violence against women in families living in their neighbourhood. When there is a great deal of noise from these families, they are warned, asked to leave, and the police are called:

"... There is a woman with two children living two stories above us. Her husband comes home drunk every day and both the neighbours in the building and his wife feel anxious. He beats her every day – we go outside at 12 o'clock at night and see knives in their hands. The police arrive. The police continuously come to our building... He beats his wife terribly – extremely... She always has swollen eyes and [there is] blood everywhere – it's so bad."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"Our neighbours living above us are also a problem – every night at 12 o'clock, 1 am, 2 am, there are noises – they yell, 'I am fed up' and there are noises of things breaking. We are sick and tired of this – we will file a complaint one day, but I don't know when. I think the man comes home drunk."

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Erzurum Province

Children stated that no such incidents occurred in their families, but some indicated that they had witnessed such incidents in their neighbourhood. They stated that they suffer and are greatly affected by these incidents that take place at their neighbours, but that they cannot intervene. It was understood that they refrain from reporting such incidents, being afraid that they may also be victim of violence, since there were no changes in the perpetrator's actions despite the warnings of the children's families. Nevertheless, the children believed that the proper reaction would be to warn the respective family and call the police. It was indicated that men are punished by a restraining order as a result of their acts of violence.

"I mean, there is nothing I can do... much as I do not want it [the violence]... if you warn the man, he can kill you – he is so aggressive. Therefore, there is nothing I can do."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"First, we have to make a verbal warning – in the form of a request. But if he does it all the time, then one can go to the police."

(Erzurum, Female, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



During the discussion at the middle socio-economic level, experiences were shared of the respondents who had witnessed incidents of violence against women. They said that, generally, neighbours called the police, and the man was given a restraining order. They said that at times their families were among the people who sometimes called the police.

“My family always calls the police when we see a perpetrator of violence and the police come and get him.”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

“The police came and took the man [husband]. The woman and her children become destitute”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

During the discussion at the low socio-economic level, respondents said that there were no incidents of domestic violence in their families but that sometimes there were arguments. Nevertheless, they talked about the incidents of violence observed in their social environments and the consequences. As the discussion proceeded, they said that incidents of violence were experienced by their very close relatives and that attempts were made to settle these issues within the family. Respondents said that the family elders and the brothers of the father were involved in solving the issue, that women were aware of women’s shelters and that they could run away, but that women preferred to make peace with the father for the sake of their children. Women tended to keep such incidents confidential, being afraid of getting divorced. It was said that women were subject to slander, especially regarding their chastity, that they needed to protect themselves, and that they would be disowned by their own families when subject to slander.

“Some problems are not told to anyone. They persist as years go by.”

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

Opinions on the Prevention of and the Fight Against Violence

In all the groups, there were differences in approaching the issue of incidents defined as violence against women.

Aydın Province

Preventing domestic violence against women

During the discussion at the middle to high socio-economic level, the main discussion concerned the concept of ‘rights’. In this group, respondents strictly disapproved of men committing violence against



women. In addition to the elimination of violence, men should behave positively and kindly towards women. Further, women should not be obliged to do as their husbands tell them, and the couple should make compromises in marriages. All these opinions are interpretations of practices regarding women's and men's rights and responsibilities. However, no suggestions were made as to how these concepts may be implemented in society.

At the middle socio-economic level, respondents recommended that women should combat violence by advocating women's rights. It was also suggested that women should unite within an association or social group in order to fight against violence together. The respondents indicated that they themselves would like to take part in such actions in the future. Emphasizing that violence against women was a social problem, they indicated that this issue should attract more attention.

During the discussion at the low socio-economic level, it was suggested this issue should be approached at the family level, stating that the couple should pursue their relationship within the framework of a contract. The woman and the man living in a beautiful house and loving each other would be a positive development. In this relationship, the woman and the men would have equal rights, which would be respected. Respondents were unable to find a way to build such a family relationship. At the middle socio-economic level, the discussion developed the suggestion further and support from a psychiatrist was deemed helpful in supporting family communication.

*"As long as they keep their word and do not hurt each other, they would get along well anyway."
(Aydın, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)*

*"If the man is able to say, 'Mind your own business', then the woman should be able to say that to the man, too."
(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)*

Informing women and men about violence, which would also involve scientists was among the suggestions. It was indicated that psychiatrists should inform society about family communication and solidarity.

Responding to domestic violence against women

It was suggested that the father's acts of violence could be prevented through pressure from the children. It was emphasized that being angry and ignoring him would be influential in stopping such acts of violence.



"If the father loves his children, if they have children, the mother is forced to... endure – not the beating, but, in the end he wants something and commits violence if his will is not fulfilled – the mother would do what he wants and solve the issue this way maybe... but maybe not... if he loves the children... the children may intervene saying, 'Dad, if you love us, don't do this!..'"

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

It was suggested that the woman should get divorced and establish a life of her own in order not to be victim of further violence. At the high socio-economic level, it was emphasized that such marriages and relationships involving violence were not acceptable. However, at the low socio-economic level, respondents stated that divorcing would be difficult if the woman does not have economic independence; possibly the woman would have to return to her husband after the divorce.

"For example, the woman and the man are talking and the woman says, 'I love you so much, but you are so violent that I have fallen out of love with you', and the man says okay. The court decision (continuous talking) – the woman goes to the court."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"You cannot solve it through dialogue... When you go to the court... they get divorced but... if the woman is not working, she goes back to him."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

The respondents were mostly of the opinion that the problem of violence cannot be solved. Some women accept violence and continue living with their partners because they are deeply in love with them. What is emphasized here is that, for the domestic violence to end, first the woman should not accept such acts. Another point of view was that the man would continue his violent actions. Respondents indicated that men would not stop violence voluntarily and that they should be punished. Others stated that even punishment would not prevent violence, and that, on the contrary, it would instigate it:

"May I say it? I don't agree with what has said... even if he goes to jail, he will eventually come out and commit violence against the woman again; and also, even if they get divorced and, for example, the woman wants to set up a new life – and she marries someone and then the man would say, 'You left me and married someone else and I cannot look anyone in the face now because of you' and kill the woman. That is, since the man is brutal, he solves all issues with violence – he does not try dialogue... I don't think so... if the man goes to jail and if they commit violence against him, then the man would be encouraged even more thinking, 'Look what I'm going through because of you.'"

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



"He would get even more frustrated... when he goes home, he would beat her again – he would be a thousand times more violent than what he suffered inside [jail]."

(Aydın, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Ankara Province

Preventing domestic violence against women

Suggestions for preventing domestic acts of violence were raised mostly during the discussion at the high socio-economic level.

Respondents suggested strengthening the social structure and women. The woman should take a position and know her rights in order to be able to have a say in the family. Women should choose their spouses themselves when setting up a family. The importance of the man's education, family structure and the environment he grew up in was emphasized. This shows that they are aware of the fact that marriages should be based on solid foundations and the importance of strengthening family relationships:

"I believe that education is very important. As said, if there is no education, then the problem is big. You accept whatever you see around you as right – you don't have your own rights and wrongs. If you have grown up in an improper environment, you are in a bad state."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"I think that the woman should establish her authority in the family right from the beginning – I mean, of course, she has to respect the feelings of the person before her, but she has to establish her authority and sustain it. She should not let her husband yell at her. She should make him notice that she is an individual."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"I think this says a little bit about the place where he grew up, his observations, his experiences. If his family acted that way towards him as a child, as we said, he believes that he would be able to solve the issue this way and so did just that."

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

Respondents stated that acts of violence were observed in families where there is a problem of communication. At the high socio-economic level, the problems in the family were about communication – spouses do not talk to each other, the man does not listen to the woman, and there is no control of tempers. Respondents emphasized that the man should be understanding and should not put the woman under pressure, and that the feeling of trust was very important between spouses. They indicated the importance of spouses empathizing with each other and that their capability in facing



violence should be improved. This shows that personal behaviour is important in terms of continuity of the family union and that personal improvement is a must.

“For example, sometimes people fail to control their temper during arguments and there may be a major problem due to something very minor – I think in such situations we have to control our tempers, realize that the person in front of us is an individual, and we have to empathize – but here, this is not the only thing about the man that attracts attention. He is like that.”

(Ankara, Female, High Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

Responding to domestic violence against women

At the high socio-economical level, respondents believed that the reaction of the woman to the first incident of violence would determine the future situation. If the woman has an uncomplaining approach at the beginning, violence would continue. The suggestions for stopping violence were television programmes for raising awareness among women, providing women with access to women’s NGOs, and supporting women in acquiring their economic independences. Also, a social campaign for preventing and stopping violence was recommended. At the high socio-economical level, some respondents proposed common solutions to stopping violence through changing the man’s behaviour through awareness-raising programmes and defending of women’s rights.

In addition, at the middle socio-economic level, respondents said that women should follow generally accepted rules. During the group discussions, it was believed that this would prevent the repetition of violence:

“Everyone could express their opinions and would compromise. This way, the man may manage his family better. He would be more respectful towards his wife, and his children would not grow away from him.”

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Respondents suggested to warn the man to stop such behaviour. These warnings should be made by someone whom the man fears and respects.

“Everyone is afraid of someone. For example, maybe the father is afraid of his own father or other friends of his. The mother and the children can turn to these people. They would warn the father, and a compromise may be made.”

(Ankara, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



Erzurum Province

Preventing domestic violence against women

Suggestions were provided for preventing violence, which can basically be grouped in two types. In the first group, it was recommended that certain conditions be in place when forming a family. In the other group, it was recommended that women live according to the rules set by their partners in order to prevent domestic violence.

The educational level was a determinant in emotional control. The importance of partners getting married only after getting to know each other was emphasized, and love and respect in the family were defined as prerequisites. This suggestion was common at the low socio-economic level:

"In order to eliminate violence, everyone should feel love and respect for each other. Some people don't read and they don't know what love is, what compassion is. Since they do not have enough knowledge, they may get angry."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

There was another group of suggestions prioritizing women's rights. Women's rights were defined in several different discussions. At the high socio-economic level, the man's actions in the story – restricting the woman's actions due to his being jealous, selfish, loving/not loving the woman – were defined as violent. At the middle socio-economic level, his actions of not giving permission to the woman, not letting her speak and beating her were defined as violent. At the low socio-economic level, a group of respondents stated that the woman had the right to leave the house, talk to her neighbour and call her relatives on the phone. Restriction of such acts was defined as violence. Only a limited number of suggestions concerned implementation of these rights in order to prevent women from suffering from violence. One of the suggestions at the high socio-economic level was: "The woman has to struggle against violence and get divorced if necessary." In all the groups, respondents believed that there may be conflict between social and cultural patterns, and accessing rights.

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, in order to prevent violence, it was suggested that the father in the story should warn her wife/daughter and give permission in various cases. At the low socio-economic level, respondents stated that the man should nicely tell the woman to stay home and that she should obey in order to prevent violence. It was expected that the woman would be convinced following an explanation:

"I want to continue this story. For example, the man should have said to his wife, 'My dear wife, I am jealous of you and I don't want you to go.' If the woman had a positive attitude and said, 'Ok dear, I won't go' and they would sit on the couch across the TV with their children and she would prepare dinner, then there would be a nice family setting."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)



Responding to domestic violence against women

At the middle and high socio-economic levels, respondents felt that the woman should obey the man in order to prevent further violence in the family. During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, some of the respondents deemed it normal and acceptable that the man set rules for the woman.

Some of the respondents indicated that a few incidents of violence are acceptable when the rules are not obeyed, but that a continuation of the violence would be problem. Others stressed that getting angry when rules were disobeyed was normal. The basic approach here is that if the woman had obeyed the prescribed rules, then violence would not continue. According to the girls in their early teens, married life should follow the rules set by the man and, if necessary, violence is also acceptable:

“He warned her a couple of times; the woman should have listened to him. But scolding instead of beating would be more appropriate. Beating is not good.”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

“F-1: I would do whatever he would say. If he said ‘Don’t go to your neighbour; I wouldn’t. If that woman had not gone to her neighbour, she wouldn’t have been beaten.

F-2: If someone set conditions upon me, I would override them.

F-1: If you override the rules, you would be beaten.

F-3: You would continuously get divorced (all other girls laugh)”

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

“This shows that the woman had done something wrong previously and her husband was mad at her. This is what I think. No one deserves to be beaten the first time... He had warned her before. Then he would say, ‘I had warned you’. He would prove that he is right. He would say, ‘Didn’t I warn you, I told you not to go – I am jealous of you – what if there is a man there?...’

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

It was emphasized that one of the important aspects in preventing violence is for the man to be conscious of what he is doing – not just to the woman but to all the family members. It was suggested that the man should go to a specialist.

In case of failure to solve domestic problems, the adolescents who adopted the viewpoint of rights, suggested that women should resist violence and get divorced. They expressed their concerns over the decision of getting divorced. Some respondents suggested that divorce would have adverse effects on children and therefore should be considered a last resort. One participant stated that spouses should be honoured, that the woman cannot file for divorce, but the man can if he sees that the wife has erred. Another important finding was that, at the low socio-economic level, most of the group supported



women's independence, whereas at the middle socio-economic level, most of the group stated that it was hard to accept divorce:

"F-1: I agree with my friends but if this is to go on like this, they can get divorced. If there is always violence, always fighting..."

F-2: If she arrived in a bridal dress, she would leave in a shroud.

F-3: I think so, too.

Other girls: Oh, no! [in an insulting manner]

F-1: There is nothing then. But let me tell you this – the woman does not have to put up with this. Is she a slave or what? She does not have to be victim of violence – if they cannot get along, they should get divorced."

(Erzurum, Female, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"She should defend her rights, she should resist, she should get a divorce."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

"I agree with ... she said, 'If he beats me because I went to visit my neighbour, I would get divorced... if he does not let me go out and I listen to him and don't go anywhere, and my neighbours cannot come visit me, I would get a divorce."

(Erzurum, Female, Low Socio-Economic Level, 7th grader)

4.a.ii.2. Male Students

Group discussions were held with secondary school students in the survey provinces in line with the sampling. A total of 72 students, 24 each from Ankara, Erzurum and Aydın, voluntarily participated in the discussion groups. Each group consisted of eight students. Table 8 shows the male student respondents in the discussion groups by province and socio-economic level.

Table 8: Distribution of male secondary school students, by province and socio-economic level

Provinces	Low Socio-Economic Level	Middle Socio-Economic Level	High Socio-Economic Level	Total
Ankara	8	8	8	24
Erzurum	8	8	8	24
Aydın	0	16	8	24
Total	16	32	24	72

The analyses of the opinions expressed by students in this discussion groups are provided below.

Position of Women and Men in the Family and in Society

During the discussions with male secondary school students in all the three provinces, respondents emphasized the role of the family in a child's growth and development. They responded that the family protects the child, provides warmth and confidence: "[The family] is always beside you and behind



you, supports you and helps you". There were differences in this definition of family according to the socio-economic levels. At the high socio-economic level in Ankara, respondents provided examples of togetherness when defining the family:

"What does family mean? When you come home, for example, you get bored if you are alone. When there is your mother and your father, you talk to them, tell them your problems, tell them what happened at school – since I am an only child, I talk to my mother and my father more. When I go in my room, I get bored. I play but I get bored after 1-2 hours. Being [part of] a family is a great feeling. You feel proud of your family – being there, behind you."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"The environment where we would share our problems when we need it, when we feel bad..."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

The family was defined by boys in their early teens in terms of 'gender' roles. During all the discussions, the task of the father was cited as working at an income-generating job to earn a living for the family and the mother as looking after the house and keeping it in order. Students expressed their contentment in finding their mothers at home when they come home from school. During the discussion, particularly those held at the middle socio-economic level in Erzurum Province, respondents stated that it was difficult for society to accept that men should help with the housework and that it would lower men's prestige in society.

"And there is one bad thing about it – when you come home from school, your mother is at home, the food is ready, you study until the evening –but if your mother is working, you never know what you could get away with without her knowing..."

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

During the discussions in Ankara and Aydın Provinces, especially at the high socio-economic level, the notion of "responsibility sharing" was emphasized. One of the issues that attracted attention during the discussions was that, at the low socio-economic level, "sharing responsibilities with working mothers" was more commonly mentioned. Respondents stated that children as well as the mother and the father should share family responsibilities.

"For example, the father works, gives the mother... the mother cooks and then the two are equal in the end; if the father does not bring home money, the mother cannot cook; if he does, then the mother cooks."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)



"Everyone has the same task at home. For example, when the mother does not cook, the father does – when the father cannot earn a living, the mother does."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"Everyone must do the housework – when one is doing it, the other should not sit and watch TV; we have to help each other – cooperate."

(Aydın, Male, Low-Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

The opinion that women and men are not equal was dominant among boys in their early teens. It was observed that the relationship between physical strength and jobs came to the forefront when discussing the issue of women working outside the home. In Aydın Province, respondents felt that the responsibilities should be shared, that partners should work at income-generating jobs and be in charge together of keeping order in the family. In addition, in Erzurum Province, it was observed that gender limitations were more prevalent, and most of the respondents felt that the man should have a say in deciding whether the woman would work outside the home and the type of work. Nevertheless, this opinion was expressed in different ways at the different socio-economic levels. At the low and high socio-economic levels, it was felt that physical strength was the main determinant, while at the middle socio-economic level, it was gender roles:

"Women are more fragile, they get offended easily by things, but men are more resistant, they are better, they have the power to do everything."

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"... both the man and the woman should work. Sometimes, the money earned is not sufficient. She should also work. There are occupations, professions for women. For example, they clean houses... cooking wouldn't be any problem... both could do the cooking when they come home from work – the mother goes [to work] and the father cooks, or vice versa."

(Aydın, Male, Low-Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"The girl or boy does whatever s/he sees from his/her mother and father – his/her elders. When the child grows up, if her mother is a housewife, she also wants to be a housewife. Or if his father was a doctor or an engineer, the child would want that the same."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"Now, there are statistics that the cooks of 99 out of the best 100 restaurants in the world are men – they cook the meals, this is the reality. But this task is given to women in Turkey. Except for military service, women and men are able to assume almost any duty equally. However,



it is really very difficult for women to perform military service because this requires physical strength. In terms of brain power, they may be equal, even superior, but for example, women are very meticulous. This is true. Men can also be squeamish, but not as much as women. But a woman cannot survive at a military unit. This requires physical strength."

(Erzurum, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Definition of Violence

During the discussion in Aydın and Ankara Provinces, respondents had adequate knowledge in terms of defining violence in an international context. Indeed, the groups understood and mentioned similar issues when asked about the concept of violence. These included physical acts such as beating, fighting, kicking, slapping on the face, and hitting as well as psychological and social acts of violence such as arguing, using foul language, getting angry, swearing and insulting. In Ankara, economic violence was also included in these definitions at the middle socio-economic level.

In addition, in Erzurum Province, different expressions were used to define violence. At the low socio-economic level, defining violence included concepts such as "evil, fear, danger"; and the definition was extended to "criminal behaviour", "cursing", "use of weapons and knives". Participants were aware of different kinds of violence such as beating the women, not giving her water, locking children in a room and beating them, and tying and beating children and then torturing them. At the high socio-economic level, it was also stated that angry individuals may need to hit things in order to release tension:

"Two people do not listen to each other and argue, and the issue grows and they start to become violent to each other – through physical acts, by beating."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Another expression used in the definition was "deliberately hurting someone". This suggests that individuals perceive the same incident differently depending on the area they live and their socio-economic or cultural level and, accordingly, certain acts may or may not be included in their definition of violence.

Opinions regarding the causes of the violence described in the story

Children in their early teens were asked for their opinions on violence and its impact on the basis of a story in order not to disturb them.



Part 1 of the Story:

"12-year-old is a 7th grader. She has two brothers, three and eight years old. Aylin's mother is a housewife and her father is self-employed, working with his brother. One day when Aylin and her eight-year-old brother returned from school, they saw that their mother was very upset. Their little brother was crying incessantly. Afterwards, when they saw their father, they realized that he was very angry.

The two children tried to learn what had happened at home that day. After seeing her [older] children to school, their mother went to their neighbour to have tea, taking their little brother along. Several other ladies also came to visit their neighbour and they sat together and chatted. After returning home, their mother fed their brother and put him to sleep, and afterwards, she tidied up the house and started cooking.

Their father did not want his wife to see and visit their neighbours, and he occasionally called her on the phone at home to check on her. That day, their father had called their mother on the phone to check on her again and, when nobody answered, he decided to come home early. When their father came home, he wanted his supper immediately, but their mother told him that supper was not ready yet. When their father asked her why she was late, she told him that she had gone to their neighbour's house to have tea and that she had done the other chores when she came back."

Opinions on the Incident in the Story

By stopping the story at this point and asking the respondents to complete it, the aim here was to understand adolescents' tolerance and insights with respect to the incident. Upon completion of this story, the comments differed by province and socio-economic level.

In Aydın Province, especially at the high socio-economic level, some students perceived the main problem as "the meal not being ready", and also indicated that there would be violence. At the low and middle socio-economic level, the initial reactions were that there would be an argument. Expressions used by respondents included "women have rights, men should respect them" and "there would be an argument between them", which underlie the acceptance of violence. However, in general, the dominant opinion among the respondents was that women have rights in the family, limited by the men's desires.

"The mother would say, 'Don't you go anywhere with your friends?' or something like that – and also 'Why did you come back early today?'"

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



"The man works and comes home and the woman is always at home – when the man scolds her saying, 'Why didn't you prepare the meal by this time?' and the woman says, 'Why are you yelling at me?' – there is an argument."

(Aydın, Male, Low-Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Respondents said that the man was right, which suggests that they feel that violence is acceptable:

"For example, the man commits violence against the woman and she says, 'My husband is violent towards me', but she does not say what she has done, she only blames her husband... he is also guilty, but the woman must have done something, since the man would not beat her without a reason. The woman has done something and her husband has beaten her."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"For example, he forgives her once, twice, thrice, and by the fourth time, there is violence."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

In Ankara, during the discussion with boys in their early teens, obedience to the man was considered the main problem. The boys believe that the father's will is dominant and that he is the decision-making authority in the family. Expressions like "the woman realizes what she has done is wrong", "the woman is not obeying her husband", "the woman is acting in an objectionable way" were common during the discussions. Still, it was observed that there were differences according to socio-economic level. At the high socio-economic level, most of the respondents said that such minor incidents would not create any problems in a family, that they can prepare their meal together. These perceptions regarding the limits of these rules differed according to the socio-economic levels of the respondents. At the middle socio-economic level, respondents expected that the situation would turn into "scolding and fighting", and even "beating". They believed that there should have been reasons for the man not to let the woman go to the neighbour, such as lack of trust, jealousy, the woman's obligation to be home, and traces of violence on the women's body and the man not wanting anyone to see them. This suggests an acceptance of the man's authority. At the low socio-economic level, on the other hand, the opinion was that family decisions should be taken together but that women should fulfil their family responsibilities.

During the discussions in Ankara, the age of the respondents was another factor in different opinions. The sixth graders said that the mother was right, and the father should be more tolerant, while the eighth graders said that the father was right.

"I mean, this is a minor problem. He should have said that it was not important. And when the children arrive, the mother and the father go to sleep, and he would not be that hungry – they could have eaten together happily with their children."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



"Maybe she had bruises on her face and on her arms and when she went to the neighbour, she would have seen the bruises."

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"They may have got into a fight because she didn't obey him."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"Both the mother and the father are wrong. The mother should not go visit the neighbour at meal time -- she should go in the morning. The father should not get angry because she went to the neighbour -- she has rights, too."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

In Erzurum Province, respondents in general stated that there would be fighting and violence at home. The man would have rules regarding the woman's behaviour. If the woman violates them, the father would get angry and use physical violence. Nevertheless, it was stated that the reasons for such rules were the man's desire to protect the woman from suffering and to care for his family and his children; i.e. the man is the one establishing order in the house. Students indicated that they would be very sorry if their mother would suffer because of the rules established in the house, and that the father should be able to solve the problem through dialogue. They also said that women's rights should be strengthened. In Erzurum, the opinions generally did not differ greatly by socio-economic level:

"...but the woman is right. If it were our mother, we would not want [her] to be hurt even if it is by our father. However, maybe we would not be able to say anything if the perpetrator is our father -- since we are young. If we think of the ending of the story, there may be a fight or hospitalization -- a minor argument. Why does the father not want the woman to go to the neighbour -- he does not want her to get into contact with others, he wants her attention exclusively for himself. Therefore, he does not want her to establish any relations with the neighbours -- there may be violence in the end."

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"... maybe the husband is jealous of the wife. Because some men... do not know what women can do -- maybe that's why the man warned his wife saying, 'Don't go, sit at home, make your tea...'"

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



Part 2 of the Story:

"Their father shouted at their mother: 'Didn't I tell you not to go to the neighbours?' As their mother was trying to explain why she was late in preparing the supper, their father told her that she should not talk back at him; he got angry and started beating their mother. Right then, their little brother woke up hearing all the noise and started crying. Their mother had also been beaten by their father the week before because she had called their grandmother on the phone without getting permission from her husband."

Interpretation of the Story

In Aydın Province, at all of the socio-economic levels, the violence in the second part of the story received a strong reaction; it was emphasized that these problems should be solved through dialogue.

"This is very harsh – too harsh in fact – he disrespected the mother. So what she went to her neighbour one day – what would happen if you eat outside one evening?"

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"For example, the woman should say something, tell him what she has done at the neighbour, but the man does not want her to speak – he yells at her, in other words, he restricts the woman's freedom of expression – the woman was about to explain why she went to the neighbour, maybe, she was right, maybe..."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

At the high socio-economic level in Ankara (6th graders), the initial reactions were not accepting the violence. In addition, at the middle socio-economic level (8th graders), the dominant view was that the man could have beaten the woman due to jealousy, her over-spending, her revealing family secrets, her failure to compromise with the man's family, etc. and that the woman should have behaved in such a way that she would not cause all this to happen. At the low socio-economic level (6th graders), women's rights were brought up; possible reasons for beating were suggested such as wearing immodest clothes. These findings suggest that the approach towards these issues change according to the socio-economic level (and possibly also according to the participant's age) and that men's violence against women is acceptable:

"For example, if the husband arrives home at 8, if she were to go to the neighbour for 1-2 hours, she could have come home on time and prepare the meal, there would not be any problem."

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)



"I agree with Women should not be beaten. The husband warns her and, if she does it again, he warns her again, and the woman would not do the same thing once again if she understands his point. [The interview: What if she does it again?] – If she is a human being, she would understand... it's her own fault."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Although male adolescents (8th graders) interviewed at the high socio-economic level in Erzurum said that they were against violence, there may be reasons that would cause violence. The cited reasons were financial problems in the family, the man's stinginess or jealousy, and the woman not liking the man's mother. This may be interpreted as approving the violence against the woman in such situations. During the discussions at the low and middle socio-economic levels (6th graders), it was indicated that the man had the right to get angry in some cases, although he was considered wrong.

"If the neighbours incite the woman against him, insisting that she should divorce him, saying that he is violent against her. In this case, the woman files for divorce. This is why."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

The respondents also stated during the discussions that men who had habits of drinking or gambling tend to be violent towards women more frequently. They also indicated that men with psychological problems commit violence against women.

Children's emotions

During the discussions with children in their early teens, sadness and fear were the prevalent feelings mentioned in response to domestic violence. In Aydın, some children completely rejected domestic violence and did not want to participate in the discussion.

"They probably talked to their father and said, 'Dad, don't do such a thing to our mother again, be good to her' and they were sad."

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"They may start crying thinking of the pain their mother suffered. They may become sad. Another problem... they may become depressed."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



Respondents believed that the children would react to their father by being angry, being offended or fighting with him. In Erzurum, they also brought up the feelings of bearing a grudge and hatred. They also stated that the older children would intervene in order to protect their mother against their father and that they would try to resist their father.

“The children may hate their father seeing that he beats their mother. They pity their mother. They don’t like their father. This is reflected upon their behaviour, as well – they do not talk to anyone. They get lost.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“As I said before, the mother is desperate, any man, especially if he is her son, would defend the woman – for example, if I would see my mother in such a situation, I would defend her as much as I could. My father would not do such a thing anyway – and I wouldn’t be able to resist my father – he is older and physically stronger – but I would still do the best I could...”

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Respondents believed that the children would be influenced by the incidents in their surroundings and would carry the traces of violence forever. They stated that children raised in an environment of violence may adopt violence behaviour in their future.

“The psychology of the child – the children must have been adversely affected. They must have become depressed. [The interviewer: How so, for example?] They see that their father is angry at their mother – the child would do the same to his future wife.”

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

“The child becomes used to violence at home – s/he would do whatever s/he sees at home to his/her friends at school. For example, s/he would beat them or annoy them.”

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“They would feel bad psychologically. They would be nervous against the people around them – to their friends and relatives.”

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

It was stated that the child would become desperate following an incident of violence and may not go to school. While the reason for this opinion was not analysed in depth during the discussions, it may be interpreted that children would feel outcast in society.



"Children would be affected from this... Children – little children, may be violent to other. At school, for example, while a 7th grader's academic performance was good during the first semester, but then s/he would start to be odds with teachers and friends. S/he may start to be violent towards his/her friends. When the children grow older, they would copy their father when they grow old, do the same, thinking that it's something good."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

In Erzurum, it was stated that, in cases of domestic violence, the age levels of the children matter: young children would not fully understand on the situation and may simply be scared, while older ones would become negatively affected from the situations psychologically and feel responsible. During the discussions, it was indicated that the children should warn their father and try to prevent him from beating the mother; the issue of violence against the father was also brought up.

"I think he [the child in the story] feels rage and sadness. But, of course, the three-year-old did not understand much about what was happening. He uses force on others because he cannot do it to his father. Because, for example, if my father hits my mother, I attack my father, but a child at that age cannot do this to his father, so instead he does it to his friends."

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

It was mentioned that children think that their father does not like their mother nor his children.

During the discussions, it was understood that one of children's greatest fears is that their parents get divorced. It was discussed at length that children would have much difficulty in tackling this problem. The child would stay with the mother but would not give up on the father. It was emphasized that couples who do not get along well should get divorced before having children.

"He would be sorry that his father and his mother are like this and he would have various questions – Does my father love my mother? Will my mother and my father get divorced? Why are they doing this?"

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"When his father beats his mother, he might think that his father is a bad person and he would feel rage towards his mother."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



If They Were the Child in the Story...

Erken dönem adolesanlar bu olaydaki kişi ile empati yaptıklarında sorumluluk hissederek sorunu çözebilmek için farklı çözüm yolları önermişlerdir. Görüşmelerin hepsinde “anne” çok değerli bir kişi olarak tanımlanmış, onun korunmasına ilişkin farklı mekanizmalar geliştirilmiştir.

“As I said, I would protect my mother and feel rage against my father. Because I have always loved my mother a little more... Because my mother carried me for nine months – she is very precious.”

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

There were suggestions for improving the relationship between the father and the mother. One was talking to the father and telling him that such incidents should not occur. It was striking that this opinion was expressed by children from the middle and high socio-economic levels in particular. Another reaction was “fighting with the father”. Solving violence through violence shows that adolescents did not have enough knowledge of other ways of finding solutions. This may be also interpreted as a result of the changes that boys of early to mid-adolescence undergo and of the male group dynamics during the discussions, which may be considered an indication of male behaviour as it is defined in the gender roles in the society.

“If I were in’s shoes, I would not let him beat my mother. Now, if my father attempted to beat my mother, I would hit him.”

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Male adolescents believed that they would be able to seek help from others to protect their mother. It was observed that, in all the three provinces, the dominant opinion was that the social circle around the family would be able to intervene and solve the issue. In Ankara and Aydın, neighbours, friends of the mother and the father, and relatives were cited among the people to seek help from. It is expected that the issue may be solved through social interaction. In addition, in Erzurum, it was emphasized that the male relatives of the father (such as father and brother) would assume a significant role. On the other hand, in Erzurum, the mother’s close relatives were also cited among the people to seek help from. This shows that, in Erzurum, it would be easy for the extended family structure to establish the rules, and expectations from this social group were higher.

Suggestions were developed regarding turning to the police in cases of domestic violence. In Aydın, it was observed that confidence towards the police is very well established. In Ankara, children suggested that the neighbours would call the police and that they themselves would go to the police together with their proof. In Erzurum, while seeking help from the police is regarded positively, it was indicated that following police intervention, domestic violence would increase further. This suggests that the



mechanisms affecting the family structure are different and that traditional extended family structure is dominant.

"If such an incident happens, I would be on my mother's side, I would protect my mother like this [showing with her hands], then I would go in the room, lock the door and then call my grandma and my uncle."

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"If I were in the shoes of, I would find a mobile phone and record the scene of my father beating my mother, and then take it to the police or an elder of mine. I would do whatever is necessary."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"You have a phone and your mother would definitely have a brother or someone. I would call them or the police. As a matter of fact, currently, the police come too late in case of incidents of violence – the woman goes to the police to file a complaint, the police comes, and two days later the man kills the woman, ... The man kills the woman following the violence and the police then gets involved. I mean, in our country, precautions are insufficient, because [the violence] continues. As I said, I would not prefer to call the police. I would call my mother's brother, my uncle or, I don't know, I would call the family – I would try to solve the issue internally."

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

It was stated that the children would cry and feel helpless. The children explained certain types of behaviour in terms of struggling with their stress. During the discussion, especially at the high socio-economic level in Aydın, respondents said that they developed various solutions for tackling grief or stress. These include talking to an imaginary friend or/and hugging a teddy bear. The use of play would serve as a stress-relief.

During the discussions in Ankara and Aydın, some children said that they would run away, while others said that they would go to their close relatives. In addition, in Erzurum, it was mentioned that children would assume responsibility and move their younger sisters or brothers away from the scene in order to prevent them from becoming adversely affected. Moving away may serve to prevent children from being adversely affected by an environment of violence. On the other hand, it was also indicated that it may serve as a warning so that the mother and the father would realize their mistakes:

"If I would see through the door that they are fighting and, if they continued for long, I would slam the door and walk out. Seeing me leaving, they would stop and try to search for me. In addition, I would go to the neighbour and ask them to call the police."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



Taking the mother with him when leaving the house was also suggested.

“He should go to his father and ask him why he is hitting his mother. He could ask his father why he is hitting her. Then, he could take his mother and his brothers and sisters, and leave the house.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“I would talk to my mother and tell her that I cannot stand this anymore and suggest that we leave the house together.”

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Observations on Domestic Violence in Society

Aydın Province

At the middle and high socio-economic levels, children stated that there were no incidents of domestic violence against women at their homes, but then indicated that such incidents in the families of their relatives or acquaintances. During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, respondents indicated that they did not come across any incidents of violence in the street or their immediate surroundings and believed that such incidents did not happen in their areas. At the middle socio-economic level, however, some of the respondents indicated that they had witnessed a few incidents and did not intervene. At the low socio-economic level, there were also children who witnessed a few incidents of violence against women.

Ankara Province

During the discussions at middle and low socio-economic levels, it was observed that there were many children who witnessed violence against women in society. As they were talking about it, they put an emotional distance between themselves and the incidents that had actually occurred very close to them. Respondents stated that, in cases of violence against women, there should be an immediate intervention and the woman should be spared from further beating. They also emphasized that different forms of intervention were practised. It was stated that neighbours provided support in protecting the woman and intervened by calling the police. In line with the observations of adolescents, the police would arrive at the scene but would not be able to solve the issue. In all of the groups, however, the solution of divorce was suggested:

“The neighbours intervene. The neighbours hit the man and knock him down. When women are involved, they stay aside and call the police right away. The police arrives if they are nearby, take the man and the woman to the police station.”

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



During the discussion at the middle socio-economic level, it was stated that men feel powerful and boast about their acts of violence against women.

"Some men boast about it, for example, saying, 'My woman does what I tell her to do, or else she gets beaten.'"

(Ankara, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, a few students mentioned acts of violence that they witnessed in the street.

Erzurum Province

During the discussions at the middle and high socio-economic levels, children stated that they did not think that there were incidents of violence against women in their surroundings. Nevertheless, as the discussion addressed incidents that they had witnessed, they indicated that there was violence. At the high socio-economic level, children shared their own experiences of an incident of verbal violence experienced at their school (a teacher called a student 'animal') and an incident of violence among men, which they witnessed in the street. They stated that there were far too many incidents of violence among men and that the police could intervene because they were afraid of the public. They indicated that men in the street look for an excuse to fight and that the people of Erzurum Province are in favour of violence:

"There are a lot of fights, not in the family but among friends. For example, there was a fight behind our house. They hit each other with circular blades."

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"In Erzurum, for example, if I look at a man or he looks at me, I mean if he glares at me, I would go and shoot him."

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

During the discussion at the low socio-economic level, respondents stated that there was no violence in their families, but as the discussion proceeded, some of them indicated that their father might destroy the wardrobe or pull the television cable when stressed. Respondents said that they witnessed several incidents of violence in their quarters, including child killing, wife beating; and a father-in-law committing violence against his daughter-in-law. During these discussions, respondents mentioned families or small communities from the same family that condoned violence, as well as acts of violence such as swearing at the teacher by 'violent groups/gangs' among their peers. Respondents mentioned



the use of drugs in their areas and discussed the relationship between drugs and violence. The fact that almost everyone carries weapons in the area was mentioned as normal. Respondents indicated that domestic violence should be kept secret because it would lead to undesired gossip.

"We talked about Erzurum as being in favour of violence, a tough province, but violence against women is very rare here. You cannot see it much – it's very rare."

(Erzurum, Male, Upper Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

["Interviewer: I would like to ask you something: these acts of violence such as the father perpetrating violence against the mother, domestic violence against women, as you said were happening in your surroundings – what happens in case of such incidents? Is it kept a secret in the family or is it reported to the police?]

M-1: [It] remains in the family. M-2: It is kept in the family, as a secret. M-3: In the family. M-4: Why should they tell it to anyone? Someone would stir up trouble. Everyone... they would say... I mean in our neighbourhood, there are a couple of agitators... and they would... gossip..."

(Erzurum, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Opinions on Prevention of Violence and Methods for Combating Violence

In all of the groups, the incident was defined as violence against women, but there were differences in approaching the issue among the provinces. It was striking that the suggestions for preventing violence were structured in different ways in the three provinces.

Aydın Province

Preventing domestic violence against women

In Aydın, it was indicated that the incident resulted completely from violation of the rights of the woman in the story. During the discussions at all socio-economic levels, it was suggested that the man and the woman should solve their problems through dialogue both prior to and subsequent to the incident. In addition, one student whose family had migrated to Aydın said that, in order to prevent domestic violence, everyone should do as the father says and that an approach involving the extended family including the family elders would stop the father.

"He should resolve it not by beating [her], but through dialogue."

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)



Respondents believed that opportunities should be created for couples to get to know each other before they get married. Pre-marital counsel could prevent violence.

"In my opinion, couples should get to know each other well before they get married – they should know each other's character."

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"For example, a seminar may be provided to couples by a psychologist before they get married – this may be obligatory, for example – during which the psychologist would tell them about how they would solve their issues regarding violence or other issues through dialogue."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

Responding to domestic violence against women

At the middle socio-economic level, while it was also suggested that couples should seek help from a psychologist, there were also opinions that a man would not do so:

"If they cannot solve their problems through dialogue... there is the police – the woman should go to the police. In the worst-case scenario, she should get divorced. Sometimes, the husband does not stop following the woman, so the state should therefore provide protection for her."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

"...what can the state do... women say, 'My husband is violent towards me' and the state is aware of what's going on... what can the state do – they cannot follow 75 million people... you have to be human first... you have to be a human being, you should know how to behave – the woman should turn to the relevant authorities or go to court."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)

At the middle and low socio-economic levels, it was stated that associations working against "violence against women" would provide support in addition to the police in case of a violent incident against women. Again, in Aydın Province, at the high socio-economic level, it was suggested that couples could stay apart for a certain period of time following an act of violence in order to clarify their expectations for their futures. Again, in this group, it was indicated that an electronic tagging method called the 'electronic leash' was used following an act of violence.

"...psychologists may give seminars – they should be male, and suitable and kind individuals who will be able to understand men... men should be taught by men who are able to understand them."

(Aydın, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 8th grader)



During the discussions at the middle and high socio-economic levels, divorce was suggested as a solution if the couple failed to tackle their problems. While divorce was suggested, divorce would be very difficult in cases where there are children. It was emphasized that couples should take into consideration the types of problems they may come across in the future when making this decision.

“They should get divorced – but they should have got divorced before they had children. They stay married because of their children and the woman gets beaten all the while.”

(Aydın, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Ankara Province

Preventing domestic violence against women

During all the discussions conducted in Ankara, respondents adopted the opinion that the woman should do as the man says and abide by his rules. In addition, with reference to the situation narrated in the story, it was stated that violence should not be used as a method of solution and that problems should be solved through dialogue. They predominantly stated that the mother and the father should make all decisions jointly and they should discuss issues and arrive at a decision together.

“She has cried a little too much, she should not have minded that much... next time, next time she must listen to him – next time if the same thing happens, he can get angry, but he does not have to beat her.”

(Ankara, Male, High Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“This fight would not have arisen and there would be no violence if they had compromised.”

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic, 6th grader)

It was stated that preventing girls from marrying at an early age would be influential in the prevention of violence. It was indicated that early marriages were among the causes of violence, especially in the eastern parts of the country, and that it should be prevented.

Responding to domestic violence against women

In Ankara, at the high socio-economic level, respondents stated that they considered the initial reaction of a woman victim of violence as significant and that if a woman accepted the violence the first time, she would continue to suffer from violence. It is notable that opinions regarding women’s rights were expressed and that divorce was considered a solution in families where there was continuous violence



against women. In this group, while respondents indicated that divorce would destroy the children, they also took into consideration women's rights and points of view.

During the discussion at the middle socio-economical level in Ankara, respondents suggested that neighbours may play a role in solving this domestic problem and that the police should intervene if necessary. Divorce was again suggested as a precaution for preventing the continuation of violence.

At the low socio-economic level in Ankara, respondents were aware of the programmes aimed at protecting women's rights with respect to the prevention of violence. Respondents supported these types of practices, in addition to being informed of the concepts of women's rights and of women's shelters. They believed that the problem of domestic violence was temporary and should be resolved.

"When the mother starts to live in a women's shelter, the father will have to live alone and do all the housework and then he will understand all the burden the mother lives through and he will let her go to her neighbour for a visit."

(Ankara, Male, Low Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

Erzurum Province

Preventing domestic violence against women

During the discussion at the high socio-economic level, when the respondents were asked for their suggestions in how to prevent violence in the story, the need emerged to discuss violence and its causes. They recommended that a man should not display his physical strength over his wife, who is of course weaker, and they stated that the man would not gain anything with violence, nor would it solve the problem. In addition, in the discussion regarding the cause of violence in the story, there was a consensus that the man has lost his trust in the woman. The fact that the woman went to visit her neighbour and made a phone call without his permission, caused the man to lose faith in her. However, respondents considered it wrong that the man used force on the women without communicating with her. At this point, respondents brought up the fact that the woman did not want the neighbour or her family to learn that she was beaten. They considered that intervention of the woman's family would lead to several problems, which would end up in a divorce and a blood feud; i.e. the fact that the woman did not tell anyone that she was beaten was because the man did not give her permission. The escalation of the problem was thus associated with the social and cultural patterns of area where the family lives.

At the high socio-economic level, respondents stated that the couples should get to know each other well before getting married and should base their marriage on a solid foundation in order that violence be prevented. Couples should express their expectations from each other when they decide to get married and compromise accordingly. In addition, during the process of marriage, couples should be able to empathize and communicate with each other and solve the issues that they do not agree upon. It is important that the woman should fulfill her husband's requests and ensure his trust. One of the



couples should be able to assume a humble attitude in case of an argument. In addition, it is important that the man should seek psychological support in order to acquire the skill to control himself. Divorce should be thought of as the last resort, if the problem cannot be solved despite all other interventions.

During the discussion at the middle socio-economic level, the severity of the incident were perceived differently. In general, respondents stated the need for the continuity of order in the household, the preparation of the meals, and permission granted by the man to the woman. One of the solutions suggested was that the father should behave humbly in order to control his violent tendency.

“Now, he decides to come home early. Maybe the woman – the mother— would come home earlier than her husband and prepare the dinner. She didn’t know that he would come home early – it may be because of this that she did not do it. And also – we know that the husband does not let her but still— it would be better if she had told him before visiting her neighbour.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

During the discussion at the middle socio-economic level, it was emphasized that love and respect should be at the basis of the family. Decisions should be made together in order for the family members to be able to compromise. Respondents considered that the woman and man can participate in a seminar together and raise their awareness, and that this would decrease problems.

“They have to relate to each other, they have to be tolerant. When children see this... this would ensure a positive family environment...”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

“For example, seminars should be provided in all neighbourhoods. The mother and the father should participate in order to raise their awareness.”

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

At the middle socio-economic level, it was stated that the low social levels of women cause problems. Respondents indicated that in order for this problem to be solved in society, the dowry should not be part of marriage, and men should not act as if women were their commodities.

At the low socio-economic level, the importance of love and respect in the family was emphasized, and respondents suggested that the family should spend time together. With reference to spending time together, going to the movies and theatre together was proposed; the issue of limited means was then discussed. It was suggested that the man should control himself and hit other things, if required, when he is angry, in order to prevent acts of violence. The man was considered the one who started the violence. This was emphasized by the question, “Would a woman go and hit her husband?”, which received approval from the group.



Responding to domestic violence

Respondents stated that women should protect their rights and that they could seek help from their relatives to find a solution, but that this may cause conflict among families. They also indicated that women can turn to women's shelters and associations. Going to the police and getting divorced were discussed among possible solutions. However, based on their experiences, respondents felt that violence would continue after divorce. As a result of all these discussions, there were also respondents who maintained that women should do what their husbands tell them to, assume humble attitudes, and sit at home with their children in order to prevent violence.

"There are families that remain silent even though the man comes to the point of almost killing the woman. They say, "The man is your husband, it's okay." They already paid a dowry."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

"She may seek help from her mother and her father... then come back to her husband. If she stayed with her family for a week or so, she would be okay."

(Erzurum, Male, Middle Socio-Economic Level, 6th grader)

4.b. Interviews with Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructors

Within the scope of this survey, which seeks information on the perceptions and attitudes of adolescents with respect to domestic violence against women and to effect positive change, it was considered important to also learn of the opinions of school administrators and teachers in order to develop solutions. This professional group has the opportunity to work with and observe this age group on a one-to-one basis for almost eight months a year, since it is they who spend the most time with the students after their families. The psychological counselling and guidance instructors would provide reliable information about students because they conduct private and group discussions with them, in line with their job descriptions. Thus, while focus group discussions were held with adolescents, who are the primary target group of the survey, in-depth interviews were held with the psychological counselling and guidance instructors of the schools. If no psychological counselling and guidance instructors were available in a given school, in-depth interviews were held with the classroom/guidance teachers who assume similar duties. This section provides an evaluation of the in-depth interviews held with psychological counselling and guidance instructors and classroom/guidance teachers.

Within the scope of the survey, interviews were held with a total of 36 teachers, 29 of whom were psychological counselling and guidance instructors, and seven were classroom/guidance teachers. In some schools, as temporary situations, psychological counselling and guidance instructors were absent due to meetings or pregnancy leave.. In others, no instructors were assigned despite having permanent staff quotas, or because the number of students was below 500 in schools. While there was at least



one psychological counselling and guidance instructor, even if on temporary basis, in all the schools included in the scope of the survey from Erzurum, however, there were no psychological counselling and guidance instructors at three schools in Ankara and four schools in Aydın when the survey was conducted. The schools without permanent staff quotas or assigned psychological counselling and guidance instructors were usually those where children of families at the low and middle socio-economical level were enrolled. It was also observed that the youngest and least experienced psychological counselling and guidance instructors were assigned to the schools with children of families at the low and middle socio-economic levels. This was also true for Ankara.

The interviews were conducted at the schools at dates and times previously arranged with the teachers. They were usually conducted on a one-to-one basis in the guidance offices and lasted an average of 40-45 minutes; attempts were made to ensure that no one would enter the room. Audio recordings of the interviews were made following instructions and obtaining permission from the teachers, and notes were also taken, which were used in combination with the recordings. Only one psychological counselling and guidance instructor in Ankara did not permit recording, on the grounds that it was not professionally ethical, and the notes taken during the interview were used in this case.

During the interviews with psychological counselling and guidance instructors and classroom/guidance teachers, they were asked how they perceived domestic violence against women, its causes, the degree of domestic violence against women in the quarters of their school and in their province, how adolescents who witness domestic violence against women in their families are impacted, what can be done to prevent adolescents from being adversely affected by these situations, and types of efforts aimed at preventing domestic violence against women. The evaluation of the replies is provided below.

Perception of Domestic Violence Against Women

All the teachers interviewed stated that domestic violence against women was not confined to physical violence, but also involved psychological, economic and sexual violence,:

“Personally, I even define spouses calling each other names as verbal violence – such as ‘you are overweight’, ‘skinny’, ‘ugly’ – it does not have to involve beating or some kind of destruction – there is a great deal of psychological violence and verbal violence, as well.”

(Ankara, High Socio-Economical Level,⁵ High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

5 In this section, the socio-economic level refers to the school and not the teacher. Socio-economic levels of all the teachers interviewed were similar, at the middle level. The reason for using the socio-economic level of the school is to describe the student profile defined through information provided by the teacher.



"I would define violence against women, from what I have read, as all acts that harm a woman's individual identity including physically, verbally and sexually. This briefly describes it in Turkey. It is not merely physical. In fact, verbal violence is neglected somehow, but verbal and behavioural violence is very significant in Turkey, as far as I have observed."

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"I am not considering it merely in terms of physical strength – it may also involve verbal violence, too, right? It may signify insults, belittlement – I don't know, it changes from person to person – it is a rather sensitive issue. Someone else would not be offended by something I get offended by. Even raising a hand is violence, in my opinion, even if it does not involve hitting. Not respecting one's thoughts is violence. Being domineering is violence... things like this."

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"Domestic violence against women is sexual violence committed by the husband. I believe the most intense type of violence in the Turkish society overall is physical violence and there is also sexual violence in families. These are the most intense ones."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"In addition to physical violence, there are many types of male violent acts imposed by force such as verbal acts, restrictions and pressure – which is frequent here."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"Violence could be defined as physical acts towards the woman such as face slapping. It may be restrictions on leaving the house, such as 'Don't go there.' It may be not giving her any money, for example – if the woman does not have any money in her pocket when going somewhere, this may also count as violence. These are the ones I can think of right now. Continuous insulting, scolding... But, of course, if the woman also talks that way, I don't know... If they are arguing, it would not count as violence, but if the woman is silent and the man is continuously shouting, then it is violence."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Male)

"I would say verbal or non-verbal. Verbal is what we mean by verbal literally, and non-verbal is beating, pushing, hitting, shoving, pulling the other. Verbal is insulting, restricting, making life difficult – all of this counts as violence. Deciding on someone else's behalf counts as violence."

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



“Violence is a generic concept involving verbal and emotional acts, acting aggressively towards the spouse, raising one’s voice, , physical violence, beating.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“Violence does not merely involve physical acts – sometimes vicious looks may be violent, the tone of voice may be violent, and even gestures may be violent. In other words, any act or action that would hurt and cause uneasiness for the other party is violence, in my opinion.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

While all of the teachers interviewed had observed all kinds of domestic violence against women and considered all kinds of acts that would damage a woman’s physical and psychological integrity as violence, different opinions emerged in terms of which type of violence hurts women more. At this point, individual perceptions and evaluations of the teachers prevailed. Nevertheless, there was a consensus that psychological violence was much more prevalent.

“Speaking of violence against women, I do not consider violence merely in physical terms, such as beating. To me, what is even more offensive is psychological violence such as insulting, humiliating, swearing – maybe such acts are more prevalent in the rural areas – these acts are more offensive, more hurtful... This is like the difference between the physical and non-physical. Everyone knows and sees the tangible and admits that it is a problem, but no one knows about the non-physical – sometimes you cannot tell it to any one – it is a problem for you, but someone else may not consider it a problem. Thus, that is even more complicated, I guess.”

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“I mean, physical violence occurs to a much lesser degree, I guess. There are, of course, extreme cases, but emotional and psychological violence is more common in our lives – humiliation, insults, disparagement... being treated like dirt – these acts are more prevalent but they are not mentioned and not known... it is considered that there is violence when a woman is injured or beaten... but in fact, the other kind is more [frequent]... if you ask which one is more [common] – physical violence is perceivable but it is much less. There is so much violence but physical violence is the lesser one. The greater one is emotional and psychological violence, I would say.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“About violence against women, in Erzurum, the man is either outside the province or even if he is here, the number of those who pay attention to their families is so little. Most are unemployed.



There is no income earned for the family, no caring for the children. The situation is tough in those terms. Our students have problems in this respect, as well. The man does not care about his home at all. He does not fulfill his duties as a father. About violence against women – not beating maybe, but as I said, there is this lack of attention and care..”

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Women

The psychological counselling and guidance instructors and classroom/guidance teachers interviewed stated that students who witness acts of domestic violence against women have difficulty admitting it; they fail to share these experience with them and, therefore, these instructor do not know the actual degree of violence occurring in the houses of these students.. The teachers mentioned that they observed different phases in learning of domestic violence against women during the discussions with the students. They said that students did not describe what had had occurred in the family, and during the first meeting, did not even mention that they lived through acts of domestic violence against women at home; that they usually had other complaints, and could only bring up the issue at subsequent meetings. The teachers stated that they did not know the exact degree of the domestic violence against women experienced in the houses of the students based on their experiences with the students.

“We unfortunately see these kinds of incidents in the environment we live in, to the extent that we are told by our students. Because, as I said, since it is a rather closed society, you don’t hear everything; they try to repress it. We cannot know what exactly [the child] is going through. This is, again, a characteristic of the sub-culture – what is experienced in the family stays in the family. Children learn this and they don’t tell us what happened at home. If there is a problem in their behaviour, we probe and uncover it.”

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“In Turkey at large, there is usually at least one incident of beating or fighting in the family and the degree of violence has increased. It exists in every family, but it is sometimes taken to the court and sometimes it is cooled down within the nuclear family. Let me put it this way, I am married, too. My mother and father – my father used to work at a public institution as a director – I remember a violent scene between my mother and my father when I was a child. But this happened only once throughout the 22-23 years I shared with them. Who? What? Let me say this, let me confess, this is the first time I have shared this incident, this feeling I had. I haven’t told this to any of my friends because this is a private issue for me as it probably is for every child.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)



During the interviews, it was emphasized that the socio-economic level influences the level of violence against women. The teachers interviewed believed that, generally, as the socio-economic level of the area decreased, the incidents of domestic violence against women increased:

“Because here, the primary problem of our students is not food, accommodation and money; and for this reason they start to discuss their secondary needs; I mean, they have problems such as ‘I could not solve these many questions daily’, ‘My boyfriend does not understand me’, etc. However, when I was working in Gölbaşı, I came across an unemployed father, a father who could not bring home any money, a father who beat his child with a hose. I have not come across such a thing around here, in this school, but here, for example, the families’ income levels are middle and above, and their educational levels are minimum high school, so, as I said, there are no incidents of violence here, but I had worked previously at a school where a 3rd grader was beaten by his father with a hose. There was, for example, a secondary school student who used to steal. When the basic needs of individuals are not fulfilled, anger is channelled towards other things and projected onto others. He commits violence against his wife. But then his wife probably accepts it.”

*(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“There is violence against women. Saying ‘no’ to this would be to deny it. It exists in Erzurum, it exists in Palandöken, it exists in Çat – it exists in Turkey. In terms of prevalence, I don’t know what we may take as a basis for an average. I don’t know, I can’t make a comparison in terms of prevalence – it exists, that can’t be denied. In my opinion, there is a great deal of physical violence in the rural areas but less psychological violence. It is the same for people with low educational levels and socio-cultural levels – physical violence is higher. Maybe it is their way of expressing themselves. As these levels increase, physical violence becomes less, and psychological and sometimes sexual violence increases.”

*(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“This especially happens in families at the low socio-economic level. As I said, students do not come to me with physical violence that much – they complain about insults, disparagement, swearing, humiliation, graver things... or deprivation – they don’t receive money, for example. Being kicked out of the house... things like this. Also, problems related to ‘other’ women are far too serious for example.”

*(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*



"I believe that it is prevalent in our neighbourhood as well. Students see these acts in their families and come to school and do the same. They tell us everything, both private and not – that fathers beat mothers, brothers beat sisters, and that this is regarded as normal. Compared to other regions, other provinces, also the city center of Erzurum, as far as my friends working in the city centre tell me, violence is more prevalent in our neighbourhood, but of course it does not exist in every household. Since it is an eastern province, we would think that there would be a higher level of violence, but it's not so. In my neighbourhood, it is at a higher level than in the city centre of Erzurum, but if I am to generalize, the level of violence in Erzurum is not higher than the average in Turkey."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

Causes of Domestic Violence against Women

The psychological counselling and guidance instructors and classroom/guidance teachers interviewed grouped the primary causes of domestic violence against women as socio-economic, cultural and personal causes. Socio-economic causes were defined as unemployment and financial difficulty, and it was emphasized that these problems created psychological pressure on the man:

"Financial difficulty. The reason is lack of money. The man is tense. He comes home and scolds his wife."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Female)

During the interviews, lack of women's economic independence was emphasized when discussing the economic causes of violence against women. Since women do not work, since they do not have economic independence, they cannot leave the house or their husbands, and have to put up with violence. This is, however, an explanation for the continuance of violence but not its cause. This statement explains why women have to tolerate violence rather than focusing on the causes and the conditions that generate it.

"The most important cause is economic, in my opinion. Women's lack of economic independence... All is related to economics – she cannot develop herself or express herself, and she accepts the man's violence – she cannot get divorced even if she wants to... the reason for all this is economic. I see it here, in the outskirts. For example, the woman becomes victim of violence, but then she starts working and get divorced from the man – she can divorce more easily. I ask mothers who become victim of violence and do not work why they don't get divorced and they say they have no choice. But working mothers take the decision to get divorced more easily. I say it all relates to economic conditions."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



“First of all, the woman needs financial support, in addition to information and training, because if a woman is victim of physical violence, this is because she is weak, because she does not have financial means, something to rely on, and she thinks she is obliged to put up with this violence – she says, ‘what can I do, shall I be on the streets?’ – there are several parameters to consider – what will happen to her children, for example.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“Unfortunately, a culture of violence was formed. They use this because their socio-cultural levels are low. This is normal for them. This is the working class usually. Women have no economic independence and they have to put up with violence.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

In addition to economic reasons, the patriarchal social structure and conditions of upbringing were mentioned. Almost all the teachers emphasized that violence is a form of behaviour and communication that is learned through observation and experience. There is a traditional family structure that does not value women and which serves as a basis for the continuance of domestic violence against women. The lack of education prevents changing this social structure and this negative situation can again only be eliminated through education.

“I mean... against women... women are seen as incapable. We have a social structure inclined to domineering those who are incapable, distressed and weak. It doesn’t matter which is which – if the strong party is the woman, she dominates the man; if it is the man, he dominates the woman. It does not make a difference if it is economic strength, social strength or financial strength. Maybe it comes from childhood... We do not solve problems through dialogue.”

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“I would speak on behalf of Erzurum: violence against women definitely exists in Erzurum. Because it is conservative – let’s say not conservative but rather patriarchal. That is, it is more dependent on the father, and the number of working women is much less than in other provinces in the west. Thus, the boss of the family is the man. In this sense, if the woman does not fulfill the desires of the man, the man chooses to be violent to her in case of conflict. In terms of education, a major problem is, of course, lack of education here. The lower the level of education, the more the families or individuals are inclined to violence. I believe that this is one of the most important factors.”

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)



“As I said, lack of education is the most important factor. The foundations of education are, of course, family structures, conditions of upbringing, etc. As the patriarchal family structure is maintained and empowered during childhood, the female and male individuals adopt these patterns. The most important factor is lack of education and the conditions of upbringing. There is some resignation or taking for granted of [the way things are] in society – or this is so deeply rooted in the subconscious that it is considered the only choice, and women therefore resign themselves to this.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“They are very conservative due to their extremely conservative attitude. They commit verbal violence. They say, “Look what she is wearing, she is seducing men like this” and then swear. They are always swearing – since students hear this at home, it is reflected in the school, as well. As they hear it so frequently, they are used to it and they consider it normal. The source of this verbal violence and harassment is their religious attitude. They do not accept change or development. In the city centre, people are more open, but here the rules are very strict.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“This is caused by a more patriarchal society. He feels that his wife does not fulfill her duties and is violent towards her. For example, violence may stem from nonsense such as cooking, caring for the children, etc. There is no single cause.”

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“First of all, we may cite the lack of education ... of both... but of course, mainly of the man... In some areas, there may be moral attitudes, i.e. traditional attitudes, where women are considered of secondary importance – for example, we have this kind of family structure in the east and the southeast. In our country, there is unfortunately no protection. She cannot seek help from her own family due to the traditional family structure. She is beaten but she cannot seek refuge in the home of her own mother and father. They do not help her.”

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Female)

“First of all, this is how he was brought up, how his childhood was, and he considers it normal; he takes it for granted and he implements it. The second issue is the educational level. Actually, sometimes, the level of education does not affect this – sometimes highly educated individuals commit violence – I know because there are several examples I was told of. Still, I think it may be influential to some extent.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Female)



“This is more related to the education provided in the family. A child takes his mother and his father as a role model. If the child is a victim of violence, s/he would start to commit violence when s/he grows up. The main issue here is to improve family communication and therefore to organize family training. In our culture, violence is everywhere – the mother, the father, the commander during military service, the boss at the workplace. This is a very generic social problem. There is violence everywhere in society and in the media. In Europe and in Russia, you might never see violent scenes on the television. But here they broadcast it live, unfortunately – this is the point we have reached.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“The first reason is the fact that society is not open to change. People are practicing whatever they have seen in the past. Our students will continue this way as well. This is a conservative attitude, in other words, misinterpreting religion. Misinterpreting and also mis-expressing the religion.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“If you consider yourself in the same situation, starting from tangible examples, you begin to adopt a fatalistic point of view. Because you do not see any organizations to seek help and support from, somewhere where you will feel safe... This is the greatest problem, unfortunately. As I said, civil society organizations are quite insufficient in this sense – except for a few associations in Ankara and Istanbul, the efforts are not sufficient. The conditions in the east are different, in the southeast they are different – society’s perspective on women is very different.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

During the interviews, the education that children receive from their families was emphasized in terms of reproducing the patriarchal family structure. It was underlined that children learn and imitate whatever they see in their families and in their environment. Thus, their role models are very important. At home, their role models are their mother and the father, and at school, the teachers. Thus, the individuals in the child’s immediate surroundings may cause her/him to learn violence by practising violent acts, and may contribute to the development of his/her personality through their approach towards the child. At this point, the importance of establishing good communication and relationships with children was also emphasized.

“The father used these words exactly: ‘I want him to become a ‘guy’ – therefore I would pat my daughter’s head, but not my son’s’. The boy should grow up to be a ‘guy’, in other words, dadas (young man) – as Erzurum people say. Now, assigning the role of a man to a five-year-old or a



three-year-old boy... How can this child not commit violence in the future? This child needs love and care – he needs the compassion of his father and his mother.”

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“I believe that there is a problem with the way male children are brought up. Actually, it is women who bring up the male children. When women raise male children, they tend to approve of their macho attitudes. They tell the girls to be polite, nice and lady-like – we offer them this kind of environment.”

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“They see this both in their families and at school from their teachers. These [acts of violence], I believe, inevitably leave permanent scars on the child. In my opinion, first of all, the family should be trained, and then the quality of the teachers and their pedagogical training are very important. Their attitudes towards children, their posture, body language, speech, etc. – these are all very important. It should not necessarily be physical. Violence may be committed through words as well – they may bring the child to a different point or provoke the child. These considerations should not be neglected because we are the role models of children.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

During the interviews, one of the causes of violence was cited as the change in the traditional family structure by raising the educational level and through the women’s economic independence. Men cannot stand the changes in how they are respected, served and listened to, and therefore act violently:

“Especially the elders, I mean our elders, like grandmothers, elder women served men at home. This is changing bit by bit. When there is change, these acts of violence are seen – beating the woman. With respect to the culture of our elders, men are always served.”

(Aydın, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Female)

It was stated that men were violent to women for individual and personal reasons, such as “feeling desperate and insufficient” or due to problems related to lack of communication.

“In my opinion, the reason is that the man feels like a loser, fails to accept his failures and fails to accept that he is wrong. He thinks, ‘I am a man, I have to be superior, the woman should be below me’; he cannot accept that he is wrong when he is wrong. What should he do? He has to repress the woman and shut her up. Although he may be aware that he is wrong, he does not admit it and represses the family, considering that he is superior.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



"I believe that this is the result of men being self-centered. If and when we acquire a mentality that values women, that gives prominence to women, that considers women sacred creatures, then social violence and violence against women may be overcome. As I said, we have to develop love, respect and empathy in society. We have to achieve social development... it will take a very long time."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

"The reason may be as a compensation for tiredness due to stress when arriving home. This violence may be a reflection of failures in [his] social life, tiredness, or negative experiences. The degree of violence may vary from resentment to insults, from swearing to arguing, and even becoming physical."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

"I believe that it is rather personal. I mean, the person commits violence due to his individual problems. A normal person, either educated or uneducated, would not commit violence. It is probably due to a personal and psychological imbalance. Thus, in my opinion, the reasons for violence are a psychological imbalance, upbringing, and parents' not valuing the child. A person would [grow up to] commit violence under these conditions."

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Classroom/ Guidance Teacher, Female)

"Definitely lack of communication... When people fail to express themselves, they choose this type of expression – which is not at all right. It breaks the communication altogether."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

Effects on Children of Domestic Violence against Women

All of the psychological counselling and guidance instructors and classroom/guidance teachers interviewed stated that students who observed domestic violence against women in their families had problems, but that they did not come and admit what their actual problem was. These children usually came to them with another complaint or problem, or were referred to the guidance services by their teachers due to becoming introverted or due to their declining academic performance.

"Students usually tend to hide these things – they keep the secrets of their parents... parents do not keep their children's secrets that much."

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



"No students have come to us to tell that they were very unhappy and restless because their father beat their mother. It is rather when we ask them about the situation at home during our conversation that they admit that there are quarrels at home. I have never come across any student who came and told me about their troubles because of what their mother suffered from."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"They don't usually come to us regarding such incidents. How we learn about them – we observe expressions and behaviour, their mothers tell us about these things or we figure it out ourselves from these students' behaviour who become victim of violence at home – their academic performance drops, they experience problems with their peers, they fight, they try drugs, they are frequently absent. When we call them to talk about their problems and suggest what the reasons may be, they express them in different ways instead of talking about it directly. They don't say, 'I don't come to school because of this,' 'I hit my friend because of that' or 'I was upset because my mother was beaten at home!' No direct admissions – very rarely."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

It was stated that certain behaviour of children emerge as an indicator of their experiences of domestic violence. Children's tendency towards violent behaviour was observed as an indication of their experiences of domestic violence against women in their families. Another indicator was the change in the psychological state displayed, such as becoming introverted. It was underlined that children who showed this kind of behaviour al disorder or change were encouraged to visit the guidance services, but that could not be forced to do so the service was voluntary.

"Children's reactions include becoming introverted, not speaking to anyone, showing a declining academic performance – we notice these things through our seminars in general, during our classes and mostly through the orientation of classroom teachers. In general, they become introverted, do not share anything with anyone or become focused on fear."

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

"If a child suffers from violence in the family, this means that further domestic violence is experienced in that family. In other words, if the parents love each other very much and beat their child – this is not possible. The child practises what s/he experiences at home on his/her friends at school... in the form of verbal violence against the teacher and against the spouse in the future."

(Aydin, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Female)



“No, these are problematic issues and students do not want to share them – they are afraid to share them, in fact. They are afraid of being victim to further domestic violence, of being misunderstood – they feel that this is a very delicate issue and they cannot share much. If we become informed about it, we call the child and ask if there are any problems, and if there are and s/he is willing to express it, s/he does. We cannot force anyone to speak up – willingness is the key issue here.”

*(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

Most of the teachers interviewed said that children’s personalities were adversely affected by their experiences of domestic violence against women. It was stated that children become generally unhappy, that their interest in lessons and school drop, that they are easily distracted and may become aggressive.

“They reflect this by being overly anxious, uneasy and fearful. They become afraid of the slightest act of violence occurring near them; they undergo examination stress. The reason for the stress during an exam is not possible poor grades, but is a reflection of the violence experienced in the family on his/her personality. This becomes a behavioural disorder: obsessive-compulsive disorder, obsession and then various psychological disorders.”

*(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)*

“They are angry, they are usually angry – they cannot accept it. They react against their father. They believe that he is wrong. However, the students coming from villages or rural areas tend to be more acquiescent. I am not sure why because they do not explain themselves. They may be considering this as more normal.”

*(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“The child said, ‘God does not accept my prayers’ and when I asked, ‘Why do you say such a thing?’ and the answer was, ‘Every night when I go to bed, I pray to find my father dead in the morning, but when I wake up, I see that my father is still there.’ The child grows up in a family environment that makes him/her say such things.”

*(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“How these [experiences of violence] are reflected in school: the child either becomes introverted or extremely active, overly joyful, trying to attract attention, aimed at hiding from others what



they suffer at home and their unhappiness. They sometimes become mischievous or withdrawn – depending on the personality structure of the child.”

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“Since there is no healthy communication, a very unhealthy society is being built. The child witnesses these acts and learns them. A child experiencing domestic violence becomes unhappy and restless. The academic performance drops, he/she fails to go through adolescence in a healthy way and suffers from psychological disorders... There may be behavioural disorders. Lack of self-confidence causes the child to become prone to outside threats such as drug addiction, running away from home or the thought of committing suicide in case of any minor incident.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“Children are very deeply affected. They do not approve of this [violence]. They are adversely affected. They feel a grudge and hatred against their father. Their motivations and academic performances drop. Their self-confidence drops. Their personal, social and emotional development is affected adversely.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“They are definitely affected in an extremely adverse manner. They tend to become introverted, their outlook on life becomes unhappy and uncaring, their academic performance drops right away and their communication with their teachers is disrupted. These are the effects we know of, but there may be a more pessimistic attitude. Violence, especially if committed against the child’s mother, is a very upsetting issue, because the mother is a very important – the primary and the most significant – source of communication for the child. I believe that it therefore causes a lot of trouble. It may adversely affect the child’s attendance at school, because when a child comes to school, his/her thoughts remains with his/her mother due to the domestic violence, and the child fails to pay attention to the lesson – so, as I said, academic performance drops and, as a result, there may be a problem with attendance and academic performance.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

Teachers stated that students in their adolescence, who experience domestic violence against women in their families, become even more adversely affected and experience conflicts with their father. They indicated that children tend to react in different ways depending on their gender. Boys grow away from



home and become involved in various activities since they are more independent, and in this way, are able to relax. However, the same is not true for girls because they are not allowed to leave home, and therefore continue to suffer from being witness to violence. In addition, there were also differences in expressing the violence experienced at home. Teachers believed that boys cannot easily talk about the issue, unlike girls:

“Those who tell us about their experiences do not approve of the [violence]. This is, of course, normal – who would approve of their mother being victim of violence by their father or someone else? No one would. I remember the students talking about their intentions to hit their father years ago... They were all boys, but I remember no one turned to an authority for [support in] such an incident. No one spoke of such an attempt. Some may have spoken of their intentions to intervene and hit the perpetrator. As this age group is at the beginning of adolescence, it is not right for a boy to see his mother beaten, so this is normal. If they are not extremely afraid of their father, they would attempt to stop him [guided by] an instinct to protect their mother.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“Now, of course, whatever our parents believe, our children would believe. There may be differences deriving from gender. If you ask a girl, she would say that domestic violence is, of course, highly abnormal, upsetting and adversely effective, but a boy – although it would not be right to make generalizations, but still—[he] would say that the father is the head of the family and he [the father] would love her when necessary and beat her when necessary, that this is up to him. There are, of course, students who are against violence against women or violence in general.”

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“They get angry, they criticize it and they think that it should not occur, that it is wrong. Their reactions... Boys have a harder time talking about these incidents, but girls are able to talk about it more easily. I observe from the behaviour of boys that they experience these incidents but do not share it most of the time. Girls are more at ease – they come right out and talk about it. For boys, it depends on the degree of intimacy – if they feel close to me, they talk about it. However, girls experience such incidents more and suffer more, too. Since families give more freedom to boys, boys usually do not witness these incidents that much, but girls suffer more. It all amounts to being a woman – girls suffer more because they are female.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



"In terms of violence, my male students act like their father at home – they give orders to their mother like, 'Go, bring me a glass of water' or they say 'I'm going out' and go out, without their mother being able to ask them where they are going, where they have been, and so on. If she does, they argue with her. In addition, they experience conflict with their fathers as well, because they cannot accept the violence committed against their mother although they do the same to their mother without being aware of it. Since they are unable to discuss the violence that they witness at home, they tend to start a fight in their group of friends – for minor reasons such as, 'You looked at me callously, you stepped on my foot, etc.' And, at school, they have a secret gang that they could gather together at once."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

It was stated that the reactions of students against violence against women differed according to their socio-economic levels. Children from families at the high socio-economic levels fail to accept it easily, while children of families from low socio-economic levels tend to consider it as normal.

"It's as if it all seems normal after a while. I would accept it if in the future I become victim of violence, because my mother accepts it as normal and carries on with her life as if nothing happened. I also may live through it and continue my life as if nothing happened. And the man becomes a role model for his son in a sense. Look, you may also beat a woman. It is recommended as a legitimate role and a pattern. . Not just, 'You may beat a woman', but more like, 'Beat your woman when you are angry at her.' To both a girl and a boy... The message communicated to the child is: 'If you have a problem with your friend that you cannot solve, you can hit him/her; this is normal.'"

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"For example, they are not annoyed with [the violence]. The insult seems normal to them. Of course, they feel uneasy and they express it, but it leads to drug addiction or running away from home very rarely... It's as if it is taken for granted. Like children with high socio-cultural levels being depressed... Here, this does not happen... they talk about it and carry on with their lives. The process develops naturally. They become uneasy about verbal violence and insults, etc. but they carry on with their normal lives... there are no incidents of suicide or running away from home."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



“Children become very aggressive when they first experience domestic violence or prior to [their parents’] divorce. They feel remorse, asking themselves why it was happening to them. However, after six months or a year, after they accept it; they undergo a state of maturity. They become more responsible and more mature after divorce. They feel guilty, but then they accept the situation. There are also those who see and learn violence. They experience violence in their families and accept it as normal, and come to school and commit violence against their friends. There are a lot of children who start to commit violence after their parents are divorced. Children from low socio-economic levels especially commit violence against their peers or younger children when they find the opportunity or when they feel strong”

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“They usually consider it normal anyway. This is what they have witnessed since their childhood. There are a lot of disinterested children... it is striking. They are inadequate at school, for example, in terms of studying. They are not aware of the importance of reading or going to school... Because there is this trouble at home. They mostly have a lot of problems with studying – they do not usually complain about their father committing violence against their mother...”

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

“They do not see this as a situation to seriously respond toward. They are a bit used to it – ‘He is a boy, he can take it; he is a father, he can do it’ – it is not regarded as too improper.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

Another point that merits attention was raised by teachers: while behavioural disorders or behavioural change may be signs of domestic violence, they may also relate to insensitivity among the adolescents. Possibly, domestic violence against women is prevalent in the quarters in which these adolescents live and they consider it ‘normal’ and therefore do not react against them. Teachers also pointed out that attention should be given to children who are introverted or, the opposite, hyperactive, from the beginning of school.

“Some object to this situation – they find the strength to object to this situation saying, ‘No one can repress me, and no one can do this to me, say this to me’. But there are also those who accept the situation saying, ‘Yes, he can do it, she must have deserved it if she was beaten’ – there are female students who react this way. Now, it struck my attention as I spoke – this shows that we have not focused much on female students, because I always think of examples from male students. There are a couple of female students who had objected – they stepped forward, and



we may not have noticed others since they are rather shy. They sit in a corner brooding – these students are always like this; there is no change, so we don't notice it."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

The Importance of Education with respect to Domestic Violence against Women

Psychological counselling and guidance instructors spoke of their efforts to prevent student witnesses domestic violence against women in their families from being negatively impacted. They attempted to provide psychological support to students whom they observe with problems and to strengthen their self-confidence and self-reliance through individual meetings. They also indicated that they provided guidance to these students on how to establish proper communication with their families.

"However, for me the real issue and the most important effect on the individual is the wounding of the self – I would focus on how the child expresses anxiety, the sorrow that s/he feels, or how this may be expressed in order to attempt to eliminate it."

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"Thus, students' positive perception of themselves – by working on the concepts of how to form of a positive image of oneself, a good body image, self-confidence and self-respect so that they may stand straighter when they encounter such incidents."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"They need enormous support, to be provided with the message that they are not alone, that they lived through or are living through such an incident but that 'we are next to you, you can overcome this' – in other words, counselling, therapy is needed by both the person who experienced it and who witnessed it in order to provide the psychological support that would allow them to continue to stand up straight."

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"We hold individual meetings. The most important thing is for the child to express his/her problem. Carrying out a diagnosis is important so that the main source of the problem can be identified. If the child shares it with us, it is important to raise awareness that s/he is not the only one suffering, that there are these kinds of violence everywhere, that s/he should not feel alone, and discuss what can be done. In such a case, it is also very important for the child to talk to his/her family and tell them they s/he is feeling sad – because since the child does not express himself/herself, the family may think that s/he is not affected."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



“Not in the area of violence, but we are making preventive efforts... You know, it is more important to prevent the incident than to treat it – so we invite the parents to the seminars that we organize at school and we hand out informative bulletins during PTA meetings. In this way we are trying to raise their awareness, even if just by a little.”

*(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

Despite these efforts, it was emphasized during the interviews that families should also be included in the meetings since they were the actual source of the problem. It was indicated that, in cases where the family problem cannot be solved, the student cannot be assisted to a large extent. According to the teachers, as the student returns home or to the environment where the problem was experienced, the efforts undertaken at school do not prove beneficial:

“There is this problem with such students: as long as the student does not accept that there is a problem and a step has to be taken in this regard, no matter what you do, it does not help. Maybe motivating the student would help at some point. This is what we are basically trying to do. Most of the time I try to address these issues during individual meetings. This is, of course, for those whose families live here – those that do not, would not [obviously] participate at the meetings. I try to hold the meeting with the family when they are here. Mostly mothers come to these meetings. In this sense, too, you remain insufficient at some point. I try to enter her emotional world, but am I adequately trained for this? I don't think so. Why not? For example, just as we are focused on an issue to discuss it in detail, such as what happened a minute ago, the door is opened ten times in a row. Now, this affects your attempt at making a healthy analysis of the student's psychological state. Just as the student is about to open up, someone comes in the room and looks at the student as if to ask, 'What is s/he doing here, is s/he referred to the disciplinary committee?' and we get distracted. And the student has a hard time opening up afterwards.”

*(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“I can say that it works for a few hours. But these children live in a very negative environment outside the school. When they return to their own quarters, they 'reset' themselves. With an effort to prove themselves to their community, to make themselves look strong, they reset themselves and then, a few days later, they come to school with the same psychological behaviour. In other words, one of the most important problems we have is the environment outside the school, which prevents these children from improving their behaviour.”

*(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)*



"I mean, no matter how much we try to help at school, if you don't dig into the root of the problem and solve it there, nothing much can be done outside. No matter how much we provide psychological support, yes, of course, we are helping, but still – you have to find the root of the problem and solve it there. In this sense, we are, of course, restricted – intervening in the family... But of course if we detect an act of violence against the child, then we can do a lot. However, if the father has committed violence against the mother, first of all, we do not see it. Children usually do not come to us and tell us about it. Only if s/he is undergoing a real depression and serious psychological problems, and when this is determined by the teacher who refers the child to us, and if we detect this when we investigate – then okay. But still, legally, there is nothing we can do about a man committing violence against a woman. However, there are things we can do when there is a case of abuse against the child. Our efforts are primarily related to the child."

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Female)

"As we said in the beginning, we are one of the legs of the tripod. The issue has to be solved at the family level – family meetings – the importance of children in the family, how parents' behaviour affects them, what its influences are, the classroom teacher, the school administration – in short, it has several dimensions. If it is only me here talking to the child, this would not make much of an improvement. If there is no common approach, there may be no improvement – we are always holding meetings to explain this to the teachers, about how they should act, that they should act consistently – the teacher's behaviour is very important. We may overlook a certain behaviour of a teacher, but if it is repeated several times, there would be inconsistency in terms of the efforts to change the behaviour of the child.. S/he may show the undesirable behaviour when s/he sees that teacher, but not when s/he sees us. This would not be an improvement, of course. For example, when the mother is angry and the father acts tolerantly, then there is inconsistency again. The child cannot decide what to do. This is a serious problem, too."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

The teachers interviewed generally underlined the need to train families. They believed that, otherwise, efforts would not prove successful. Families should participate in seminars provided at schools; obligatory family training may be developed:

"Individuals should be trained in child education before they become mothers/fathers... because, in the end, violence is a type of learned behaviour. A child sees it in the family and does the same [later]. Training of youth on the harm of violence should be made obligatory both by the head official of the district and by the school administration. When parents bring their children here, they should be obliged to undergo this training in order to be able to enrol their child in school."

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)



"I think that parents should be obliged to participate in such seminars starting with the elementary school. Because what is covered in these seminars is very important in terms of parents' healthy approach to their children, since the institution that prepares them is UNICEF..."

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

"For example, there may be seminars provided by experts aimed at parents of elementary school children. And there may also be seminars for teachers. There should also be sanctions for teachers who commit violence – the Ministry should closely follow up on this."

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"For example, the family training for the parents of children aged 7–19 was very successful in my opinion. We persistently invite the parents every term to these – even if it is only three or five [children] that we can reach; it is important for us because they will disseminate what they learn here. When they share it with one person, it would make a difference in that person's point of view. This is extremely important. This type of training may be increased and families may be reached through different means. Training of women and men on this is very, very important. As I always say, the key is education."

(Ankara, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Female)

"Children adopt a role model and imitate that role model throughout their development. This model may be a teacher or sometimes an actor. Similarly, gangs are formed here under the influence of TV series such as 'Kurtlar Vadisi' (Valley of the Wolves). Schools should be opened for parents. There should be awareness-raising efforts. There should be programmes offered over the weekend by experts throughout a one-year period. This survey should be regional and scientific. Measures should be taken with respect to causes. Responsibilities should be assumed according to the individual and social causes, as well as those related to the state and education. Regular and continuous training should be provided to the families living through domestic violence. Programmes involving violence should not be permitted in the media and on television."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

Most teachers emphasized that while problems originate from outside the school, they may be overcome through education, and education in this sense is very important.

"For example, men should be trained. Yes, men. Men should be trained in women-men relationships. This could be made obligatory. Would it be at school or in cooperation with the



school? "Yes, if they give us this kind of a task, we can do it; for example I can do it. We have, for example, PTA meetings over the weekend, and fathers usually come to them – we can talk about it at these meetings. Awareness of men should be raised in this sense."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"Here we have an issue that may be solved through education and with model behaviour. I hope we can minimize this [problem] and take a step forward in becoming a better society."

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Female)

Teachers made other suggestions in addition to family training. Giving examples from certain practices conducted abroad, they indicated that couples should be provided with obligatory training before they get married. This type of training would decrease domestic violence; it would cover relationships between men and women, child care and development, and be given either in or outside the school. They recalled, however, the importance that the training be given by experts in their field.

"They are called right from the start to begin family training – just as in the United States, couples go to a parenting school before they become a parent. As far as I know, individuals that do not pass cannot become a parent and grandparents that do not pass are not permitted to look after their grandchildren – I don't know if it is right or wrong... Maybe this type of training may be provided. Is this training sufficient? No. The individual should be willing [to participate]. S/he should try to see the issue [of violence] as a problem and try to change it. Now, this may be easy to say but it is difficult to change."

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"For example, men should be trained. Yes, men. Men should be trained on women-men relationships. This may be made obligatory. Would it be at school or in cooperation with the school? ...if they give us such a task, we can do it, for example, I can do it. We have, for example, PTA meetings over the weekend and fathers usually come to them – we can talk about it at these meetings. Awareness of men should be raised in this sense."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"In this sense, experts in this field should provide training, but not in the form of a lecture; it should be an applied training – on what can be done in practice. These should be provided as seminars to women in all quarters, all districts. Just like the registration system at the community health



centre, for example, the obligatory procedural information provided on pregnant women, there should also be a system that provides information on violence against women – in my opinion, this should be followed up. Awareness-raising efforts are definitely necessary in this area.”

*(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

Teachers also made suggestions regarding certain practices that schools may adopt in order to prevent their students from becoming a perpetrator or victim of violence against women when they grow up. Some teachers believed that a new subject should be added to the curriculum to examine this issue, while others felt that there was no need for a separate subject and that the issue may be included in some of the current topics.

“There should be hands-on efforts. Would an extra subject work? Yes. But to what extent? However, students should have applied subjects. They should be able to figure out the outcomes. Motivating the individual on the topic beginning from childhood may be an example.”

*(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“We have topics on violence – What is violence? Relationships with peers... Relationships between men and women... We have these topics in our subjects anyway. However, these should be explained more intensively. For example, one lesson is not enough for guidance. There could be an appropriate subject on this. Of course, it should start at the elementary school level. Male-female relationships and communication should be taught to girls and boys from elementary school.”

*(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“This is a possibility, in fact – directly [taught] as a subject – just as we have social sciences, these [subjects] may be included in the elementary school 3rd year’s topics – these kinds of topics are already lectures, but as I said, we fail to put into practice the guidance topics on which we lecture. Maybe they can be included in the guidance class topics. Yes, but this would be beneficial only if they are fully implemented, imposed and practised, and the individuals giving the lectures should be experts – if incompetent individuals are doing it, it won’t be beneficial. Experts should provide the good practices.”

*(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School,
Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Female)*



"A separate lesson would not be appropriate. Children would not listen, concentrate – it would not be productive. It may be in the form of a social activity; in other words, certain topics may be included in the lessons or may be presented to the child in a group. This should be thought out and arranged in detail – I am not able to provide a reply right now. A separate lesson would not be a solution in my opinion."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Male)

"It can be included in the curriculum – talking about what a child can do when faced with violence. Instead of remaining silent, where can s/he go and to whom can s/he turn. As they say, you can demand your rights only if you know them. The child should be aware of them. He/she should be informed of them in one way or another. A lesson at school on these issues would be good. Alternatively, children should occasionally be advised of these issues within the scope of their other lessons. For example, healthcare professionals come and lecture on certain topics. This can also be provided the same way. Seminars may be given. Awareness raising is beneficial, because if you are not aware, you would not know what to do. But if you know what to do, you would know how to intervene and stop it – this is true for all of us, more or less."

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"A separate lesson would be unnecessary, because as long as violence is continued in that house... the child already knows what is going on – it's not that s/he doesn't know – s/he knows that it is wrong."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Female)

Some of the teachers interviewed made suggestions regarding subjects on domestic violence against women to be added into the curriculum and the life stages when they should be provided. Teachers indicated that these lectures should be given at early ages, before certain social patterns become entrenched in children's minds:

"The elementary school teacher's style of educating, the initial education received in the family and the family as a model for the child are very important in terms of relationships between males and females. For example, if a father helps his wife, their son does the same. But if the father is a macho, the son imitates him no matter how well he is educated. Is that not so? The teacher is also sometimes a model. If the teacher is different, if s/he is brusque, the child may also act that way. They also take us as models, but elementary school is more important."

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)



“This can be prevented with education. It becomes too difficult after a certain age. In my opinion, certain habits may be imposed on children at elementary school through teaching.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

In addition to these suggestions, which may be implemented at the elementary school level (during the initial phase of the new 4+4 educational system), it has also been recommended that additional subjects be added to the high school curricula (the final four-year phase of the new educational system).

“During high school, there may be certain subjects involving preparatory topics. One may be ‘preparation for life’. How should male-female relationships be? What can be done? This is actually very important.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

Teachers also provided suggestions on course materials and implementation methods. They indicated that the use of audio-visual materials such as slides or films would be more effective rather than a classical course:

“Providing information through seminars and slides during a guidance activity with a group; activity documents and files used by classroom/guidance teachers throughout the school – these may control male students to an extent, but it should be done so that they are not offended by specific observations.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

“In-class information provided through seminars may involve testimonies of people who have experienced violence. Films and plays regarding violence may be featured and discussions may follow to learn about the opinions and feelings of the students regarding the acts or incidents of violence that they had watched, asking questions such as, ‘What did you feel? What did you think? What would you have done if it were you? What would you do if you were the beaten mother? – which would ensure empathizing with the victims.”

(Erzurum, High Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

The psychological counselling and guidance teachers interviewed mentioned their own current efforts in addition to these suggestions. They indicated that such efforts would be influential in preventing domestic violence against women.



"I try to make students empathize – I don't know if I am being as professional as others, but I use role playing. For example, we say that there is this father in this story, what kind of a father should he be, do you think, for the child to be happy? Do you think that this child [in the story] is happy? We are trying to show them that there are other positive aspects for children to think about. Because if a child has seen the father committing violence, s/he may think that it is the only way. If you make a mistake, you are beaten, insulted – we are trying to show children that there are other ways to react."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

"Yes, for example, group counselling is very important. Making a group of children of those who are aware of such lives and those who are not – raising awareness that they are not alone, that there are others like them. Informing children of their rights – especially mothers' rights... Children may pass on their awareness to their families and provide support in this way. In other words, both group discussions and individual counselling ... Classroom teachers are also very influential in this respect... If they talk about violence or family communication in their social science classes, if they conduct valuable activities that consider the issue seriously, this would prove highly beneficial for children. If they realize that it is not only they who are victims, but that there are others, too – they would share the ways of solving this issue. Others' solutions may prove to be their solutions, too."

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)

During the interviews, some teachers stated that there was no need for a new course and subject, that these issues were already included in the curriculum and that what was important was to teach them. It was underlined that the method of lecturing on these topics proves influential in forming gender roles in students' minds.

"Because these topics are already included in our curriculum... even though they may change according to the government and by perception of the decision makers... If you look at the current textbooks, you will see women wearing head scarves."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Male)

Finally, the psychological counselling and guidance instructors and classroom/guidance teachers interviewed shared their opinions on certain drawbacks in terms of implementation, which kept these efforts from generating permanent effects and made suggestions for improvement. Although one of the duties of psychological counselling and guidance instructors was psychological counselling, they



failed to properly undertake this task because their personnel was neither qualitatively nor quantitatively adequate.

“When we talk about rehabilitation, the psychological counselling and guidance instructor should be able to directly provide psychological counselling for the child and for this s/he needs to allocate a particular time with no one entering the room for a period of 45 minute to be able to ensure effective listening – however, this is not possible in the school environment – it is very difficult.”

*(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

“Psychological counselling and guidance at schools should be effective – the topics included in the curriculum should be effectively and thoroughly covered, and children need one-on-one counselling . I always say this and talk to our school principal about it too – the psychological counselling and guidance instructor has to be very careful and attentive – I sometimes remain highly reticent when speaking with a student, because a wrong word that comes out of my mouth may have a terrible influence on the child all his/her life.”

*(Aydın, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School,
Classroom/Guidance Teacher, Female)*

“Maybe psychologists should also be assigned to schools. A guidance teacher is something different. Guidance, attention, all right – but at the same time there may also be a psychological counselling. Immediate intervention, preventive efforts – we also work on these, it is our duty since our professional title involves psychological counselling; however, quantitatively we are highly inadequate.”

*(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Psychological
Counselling and Guidance Instructor, Female)*

In sum, children of families living through domestic violence against women in their families are adversely affected psychologically, which results in a decline in their academic performance. Also, since violence is a learned behaviour, these children may be inclined to violence. Thus, psychological support is obligatory for such children at schools. Normally, this is expected of a psychological counselling and guidance instructor, but these teachers claim that they fail to undertake this task for various reasons. The first is the lack of psychological counselling and guidance instructors at school due to personnel shortage or non-assignment. Classroom teachers, on the other hand, are incapable of undertaking this task education and lack the competence. Even if there are psychological counselling and guidance instructors at a given school, one-on-one counselling sessions cannot be performed properly and fail to be beneficial.



At this point, another issue that needs to be taken up and focused on is that the schools without psychological counselling and guidance instructors are those where children of families at middle and low socio-economic levels are generally enrolled. It is acknowledged that as the socio-economic level declines, social problems augment. When these two situations are taken into consideration collectively, it is observed that solving the problem becomes even more difficult. Students of schools at low socio-economic levels live in quarters where violence is more intense; they witness more incidents of violence and therefore have greater need for psychological counselling. Also, in the light of these data, it would be appropriate for the Ministry of National Education to re-examine the assigning of one psychological counselling and guidance instructor for every 500 students and ensuring a more equitable distribution of personnel, taking into consideration quality as well as quantity.

4.c. Interviews with School Administrators

The section presents the evaluation of the interviews conducted with school administrators. The primary aim of the interviews held with the administrators was to become informed on the kind of efforts that may be undertaken at schools in preventing domestic violence against women from their points of view. In addition, the school administrators provided information on their school's location, on students and their parents, as well as on the efforts made at school for children known to experience domestic violence at home. They were also asked about how violence could be prevented and what measures could be taken to this end.

Within the scope of the survey, 36 administrators were interviewed, 12 of whom were school principals and 24 deputy school principals. Most of the teachers in both secondary schools and high schools were female. This was more evident in Ankara. In addition, it was observed that administrators are mostly male. Similarly, of the 36 administrators interviewed within the scope of the survey, only three were women. Most of them were aged between 40 and 50. Administrators generally had 20–25 years of experience as teachers and 10–15 years as administrators. All except one were married with two or three children.

Most of the administrators interviewed in Erzurum were born and completed their education in this province. Thus, they were able to provide information regarding the change in the relationship between women and men and the prevalence of domestic violence against women in the province throughout the years. With respect to the professional background of the administrators, it was observed that they had been assigned to other provinces during the initial years of their careers and then assigned to the survey provinces as administrators. For the administrators interviewed in Erzurum Province and partly in Aydın Province, this entailed returning to their hometown. They said that they had worked in two or three different provinces before arriving in their current province. Nevertheless, they had also worked in different schools in the same province. Some of the administrators in fact were assigned to the schools only a few months prior to being interviewed due to rotations, consequently, they could only provide limited information on the location of the school and on their students.



Most of the interviews were conducted in the office of the school administrator or his/her deputy, and some interviews were held in the office of the guidance teacher. Since the interviews were conducted during working hours, there were occasional brief interruptions. However, these interruptions did not cause major drawbacks in the flow of the interviews. The average duration of the interviews was 40-45 minutes. Two interviews were not recorded upon the request of the interviewee, and another one due to technical problems. It was observed that the interviews were generally reliable and open-minded, and that administrators provided candid replies to the questions asked.

Perception of Domestic Violence against Women

Administrators were asked about whether there were incidents of violence against women in their area and, if so, its severity. The replies first demonstrated how administrators defined domestic violence against women. It was acknowledged that incidents of violence against women involved physical, economic, emotional, verbal and sexual aspects. It was surmised from their responses that administrators were aware of the types of violence other than physical violence:

"... verbal violence is very prevalent... they are vulgar, they swear, they speak with a loud voice and the wife becomes silent – I know such men."

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

"... violence may be verbal in addition to physical – it may involve insults or deprivation..."

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

"Of course, it depends on what we understand by violence – a look, a stern look, a suggestive look may be perceived as violence and the intention to kill may also be perceived as violence."

(Aydın, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

Administrators stated that some women had been victim to physical, verbal and economic violence involving 'being slapped on the face,' 'being pushed around,' 'swearing and insults,' 'mockery,' 'being sent to one's father's house' and 'taking her money' in their area, based on their personal observations or estimations.

The Difficulty of Schools in Obtaining Information on Domestic Violence against Women

Administrators were able to provide information regarding the socio-economic and cultural structure of the province and region where their school was located and explain the living conditions of the students' families in general terms. However, when asked about students who lived through domestic



violence against women in their families, i.e. concrete cases, they emphasized the difficulty of obtaining information:

“Our students very rarely come to us to tell us that their father beat their mother. This is not something you would come across commonly in Aydın.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

“We have no way of knowing about these incidents as long as they are not referred to the police or unless the parent comes and reports it to us.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Administrators stated that they are informed of incidents of domestic violence against women in their students' families through reports by the student or the mother. They indicated that students or mothers experiencing these incidents try to keep them within the family and to cover them up:

“... children do not want to share this too much – both in terms of detection and fear.”

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

According to the administrators, the classroom teacher or the psychological counselling and guidance instructor is the first individual at school to know about these incidents, through reports by the classroom teachers:

“Our ladies unfortunately want to cover up such incidents, usually due to a ongoing tradition as we may call it. Even if they are victims of violence, they don't want others to know about it. If psychological counselling and guidance teachers detect a behavioural disorders or a change in the student, we only become aware of it this way. Only if the students express it...”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

Administrators also mentioned an increase in the number of students whose parents are divorced or separated. While this was expressed by administrators in all of the three provinces, it was more commonly expressed by those in Aydın Province. Some administrators relate this to the cultural structure of Aydın and negatively attribute it women acting more freely in this province. Administrators were not aware of the influence of violence against divorce cases. It was observed that administrators tended to make speculations as they talked about these cases, generally based on incidents they see on the media. In other cases, administrators stated that they called in the parents of the students who showed problematic behaviour, and during the meetings, they were left with the impression that the families lived through domestic violence:



“When we talk to them, sometimes they admit these incidents. There are also cases where we understand from their body language or we figure it out when individuals do not admit it.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Certain administrators stated that this issue is not directly under the competence of the school. They indicated that, with reference to domestic violence, they were interested in whether there was domestic violence against the child rather than between spouses.

“As children did not regard us as the relevant authority, they did not make such a complaint to us – in the end we are their teachers, not the police or the judge or the prosecutor. This is why the issue would not have been referred to us or if it was referred or mentioned, we may have failed to pay much attention to it since this is an issue that does not relate to us directly. However, we have not come across many issues of violence.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

“Of course, we would not know the dimension of the violence between the spouses – or whether or not it exists. What we are really interested is whether or not there is violence against the child.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

During the interviews, teachers and administrators said that they had sometimes learned of incidents of domestic violence from observing it through the student’s attitudes and behaviour:

“We had unpleasant experiences of this with one of our students: a child from the area called the Quarters in at the..... Elementary School started to cry as I was lecturing in the class. She was an 8th grader then. I asked her why she was crying and she answered that there was nothing to say. Then I insisted, and our guidance teacher also intervened, and we learned that his father drank and came home at 3 or 4 in the morning; he grabbed her hair and beat her and wife. Even if we do not see these things, we know that they exist. These things happen in this area and we hear about them every now and then. We say that there are educated people living in this area, but we know that it exists.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Women

Administrators stated that it was not easy to precisely know about incidents of domestic violence against women in students’ families. Yet, they have certain proof of the prevalence of this type of violence in



their schools' location or where the children come from. All of the three provinces had areas referred to as the 'outskirts', which are populated by low socio-economic migrants. The administrators emphasized that domestic violence against women is prevalent in these areas, based on their observations. Nevertheless, most of the administrators were aware that it would be a mistake to discuss incidents of domestic violence against women with generalizations and clichés. There were several administrators who indicated that violence was also observed in social sectors with high levels of education:

"I believe this is more relevant to the individual, to his culture, his upbringing, his viewpoint rather than being regional. For example, an individual from the lowest cultural background level who was raised with good values would not commit violence, but an individual with a very good education and social background might commit violence. Therefore, it may exist anywhere, but if we look at it in terms of degree, [this problem] may relate to certain economic or social conditions..."

(Aydın, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

"We see on the media and in your valuable surveys that there may be violence in high-level families with high educational levels. The generalization 'the higher the educational level, the lower the level of violence' is not always valid."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

Examining administrators' evaluations regarding the overall situation in the provinces, it was observed that most of the administrators interviewed in Aydın Province believed that since economic and social conditions are better and social pressures lower in Aydın Province, domestic violence against women is not prevalent in the area. In Erzurum Province, respondents stated that due to the negative economic and social conditions and patriarchal cultural structure, this type of violence was prevalent in the province. In addition, the administrators interviewed in Ankara Province stated that they believed that such incidents were more frequent in schools located in the outskirts of the province, but refrained from making a generalization.

Causes of Domestic Violence against Women

The opinions of administrators regarding causes of domestic violence against women can be grouped under three main headings:

Social causes:

- negative economic conditions and unemployment;
- lack of appreciation for women in society;
- value judgments.



Causes due to the relationship between spouses:

- excessive devotion of the man or the woman to their family, mother or father;
- lack of love and respect between the spouses;
- lack of communication between the spouses and differences in understanding;
- early marriage;
- differences in the balance of power between the spouses.

Individual causes related to the man:

- the man's upbringing;
- the man's bad habits.

During the discussions on the causes of violence within the framework of the interviews, administrators stated that violence was generally economically based. An administrator working at a secondary school in Ankara pointed out that violence may originate as a result of restricted means in the household, stating "wealth brings love, deprivation brings conflict."

According to the administrators interviewed, there are several ways in which economic problems effectively cause violence. According to the first, a man failing to provide an adequate level of financial means to his family becomes depressed and loses his self-confidence. As mentioned by a large number of administrators, acts of violence observed occasionally should actually be considered as psychological desperation. A husband who fails to fulfil the economic requirements of his family becomes aggressive. This pretext for violence was used to the extent of legitimizing the perpetrator by certain administrators:

"As a result of unemployment and economic problems, people are left purposeless and sometimes tend to follow their animal instincts, withdrawing from emotions. An individual with nothing to do, nothing to think about, gets irritated and angry easily, which is normal."

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

"There are, of course, economic reasons, too. If an individual has economic problems, if he goes home lacking peace of mind, confidence – something to prove himself with, this is a psychological problem, and as a result, he may commit violence, maybe unintentionally – I mean this may be the situation in the region."

(Erzurum, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)



According to the administrators, with reference to economic factors leading to violence, power relations between spouses have started to change with women acquiring their economic independence. The failure of men to manage this new situation causes them to become violent. Such men regard violence against their wives as a means to resume their prior balance of power.

"You know, men have social roles, and women's social roles are different. The perspective – society's perspective... I mean, in our society, usually the man works and the woman is a housewife. However, for example, this number of working women continues to grow in favour of women. Women now have their economic independence. As the woman acquires her economic independence, she stands up against the man and protects her rights. And this may create a negative situation for the man. Do I make myself clear?"

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

"As women become stronger, stand on their feet, contribute to society, become more socialized and especially become stronger economically – as they make their voices heard at home, their spouses cannot stand it and chooses violence."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Administrators had a third approach, which involved in a wider sociological perspective of the relationship between economic factors and violent actions. Difficult economic conditions led to different types of violence at different stages, for women in particular:

"Especially in the east, where there are no employment opportunities, marrying girls at early ages, their remaining silent in the face of pressures, their acceptance... all of this results from the lack of economic independence of women. Scarce employment opportunities are an important cause of this. We see it very frequently: she gets married, she may be victim of violence or she is unhappy, she won't be able to continue her marriage but she has no other choice. Why? If she goes back to her family, the family does not accept her because they cannot afford to support her; they cite tradition and tell their daughter that she cannot come back. However, the real reason underlying this 'tradition' is the lack of economic power to support her. In addition, there are established values in society – for example, the pressure on widows. She knows that, too. Then, she has two options: she will either take the chance and live alone, and work under difficult conditions, or else she will surrender to the pressure, to violence or unrest – whatever you call it – to the pressure from her husband and his family. Then, economic independence becomes important again at this point."

(Erzurum, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

In accordance with the statements of the administrators, domestic violence against women has a social structure. Certain administrators called this infrastructure "the traditional family structure". Thus,



the causes for violence against women should be sought in relation to “*lack of importance attached to women in society*”, “*patriarchal values of society*” and “*women not being accepted as individuals*”. In this context, there were several administrators who mentioned that the boy learns all behaviour from the father and, when the child grows up, he starts to commit domestic violence in imitation of his father.

“Since women always play second fiddle in Turkish society, and since women serve men, [despite] any statement from women that men and women are at the same level, that they are equal, men still practise what they have seen from their father or their ancestors. They immediately try to repress the woman – it’s men’s intolerance.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

“You know, women are usually like second-class citizens in Turkish society – both the educated and the uneducated do the same thing. Now, for example, they say that man is the head of the family and he has the say. That way... Even if there isn’t any physical violence, there is this emotional violence or psychological violence. Women are repressed at home and their opinions are always second-class.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

“Another important factor is the fact that our cultural traditions and customs do not adapt to the current era. In other words, there is a continuation of a conflict of generations or the desire to continue what has been learned from the father, an inheriting of tradition. I believe this is one of the most important factors of violence against women.”

(Aydın, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

The negative value judgments regarding women in society are sometimes internalized by women, so much so that a female administrator may consider women ‘wrong’ in explaining the causes for violence against women. Thus, women who are not content with the living conditions provided by the husband and express their demands regarding better living conditions may actually ‘deserve’ violence:

“Sometimes you say that this individual should be beaten – there are women who deserve it. An ignorant woman does not know at what point to stop. If she has unnecessary demands and expectations, she has to restrain herself, in my opinion. You live with your spouse for years and you get to know everything about him – you know how your spouse would react under certain conditions. In such cases, you would get a more reasonable reaction if you spoke with him later instead of at that moment. I am not in favour of remaining silent either – they say, do not remain silent, if you do, you will get reactions... However, you should make your choices cleverly. You should know how to express your demands properly – dissatisfaction and endless desires may be a cause for violence. You should want something [only] if the man has the proper means.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Female Deputy Administrator)



Among the causes of violence, problems such as “unhappy marriage”, “poor communication between spouses” and “men’s failure to understand women” were also mentioned. Usually, early marriage of couples who have not had the chance to get to know each other and pre-arranged marriages end up with problems that may lead to violence. Administrators stated that, in families at the low socio-economic level, violence against women is more frequently observed as a result of arranged marriages to escape pressure from parents or from poverty.

“We are talking about economic causes because that’s what comes to mind at first, but there are also the issues of spouses not understanding each other, not having the same mindsets, family issues, their parents’ problems or the man caring more about his parents rather than his own family, the father being insensitive towards their children... There are men who habitually commit violence against women saying, ‘I came tired from work, bring my dinner – where is my tea?’ and things like that.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Female Deputy Administrator)

“With regard to marriage with relatives or acquaintances, showing the person the required respect... or practising the kinds of behaviour observed in the elders in the family... like, for example, behaviour towards the daughter-in-law or the husband acting the same way towards the wife as [he experienced in] his own family, thereby committing violence against her – we usually see these kinds of examples ...”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

In explaining the causes for domestic violence against women, administrators mentioned “drinking”, “gambling” and “cheating”.

Effects of Domestic Violence against Women on Children

It is inevitable that domestic violence against women that is experienced by children will impact on their academic performance. Administrators were asked for their observations on how this adverse condition affects the children’s academic lives as well as on the kinds of efforts undertaken by the school in helping these children.

The primary effect on the academic lives of students who witness domestic violence in their families or even become victim of violence themselves is failure at school. Almost all of the administrators interviewed referred to a drop in the academic performance of these students, who got out of control and neglected their lessons and exams:



"The student becomes unsuccessful [at school] when s/he could be very successful – let's say s/he has an exam from a subject that s/he is poor at and s/he forgets about the exam."

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

"S/he becomes confused – mentally confused."

(Erzurum, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Administrators observe the personality structures of children and adolescents in the development stage. The following statements show the negative attitudes and behaviour that emerged in students who witnessed such incidents in their families and those who were victims of violence themselves:

"First of all, both girls and boys become aggressive. They become turbulent. They attempt to solve issues the way they witness it at home – they try to commit violence against others – both girls and boys, it does not matter. They act instantaneously. I don't think they do it with much thought – because they later realize that they were wrong... as I am the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee, as well, I take statements in such cases and I observe them. I hear the phrases "I could not control myself for a moment", "I could not hold my temper" very frequently. Academic failure – the most obvious example, extreme absenteeism – the desire to leave the environment extends to the school as well. In my opinion, the negative conditions in the family reflect on absenteeism, as far as I have observed."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

Administrators indicated that children who witness domestic violence in their families have been deprived of attention and compassion in their upbringing. Some of these children adopt an "offensive", "aggressive", "peevish", "vociferous" and "irritable" attitude towards their friends and teachers; others are described as "repressed", "passive", "offended", "outcast" and "introverted". Experiencing such opposite emotions at the same time disturbs their mental health.

"Some children are influenced to a strong degree – they sit distractedly in class, they start crying for no reason, or they fight with someone for no reason."

(Erzurum, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

"If there is domestic violence, the child becomes unsuccessful at school or does not want to come to school, or s/he starts smoking or [taking] other drugs."

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)



School administrators stated that they pay particular attention to these students who show behavioural disorders under the influence of a violent environment that they witness. Some of the administrators interviewed have come face to face with such cases in person and undertaken efforts to mitigate the negative effects of violence on these students. Others who have come face to face with such cases stated that they did not know how to handle these situations. What should the role of the school be in these cases? Several administrators described the role of the school as “preventing the child from feeling alone”, “standing behind the child”, “supporting the child” and thereby “ensuring that s/he overcomes the impact of violence”. One administrator said that the aim of the school in these situations was to teach the student “process management”.

“We cannot prevent these children from being negatively affected by violence, but we can minimize the effects or teach them how to handle the situation. The ways to tackle this trauma may be taught, or alternatively, critical points to pay attention to in their families may be explained. Otherwise, in my opinion, we will not be able to eliminate the effects altogether; however, we can teach them to manage the crisis, this fear. There may be various methods – we can teach the child how to trust himself/herself. If their father is a bad role model, we can explain to the child that s/he has to improve himself/herself as a counter role model. We can explain to the child that if s/he gives up, all the people around him/her would be affected in the same way, since what the father does to the child will be done by the child to the people around him/her, to his/her own family in the future, without [his] being aware of it. Thus, we can minimize some things although we cannot eliminate them altogether. Process management – they will manage the process as long as they live it through.”

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

It was understood from the interviews that the initial measure to take in cases of violence is to have the child talk to the guidance teacher. In some cases, the psychological problems of the student are severe, and the support provided by the school’s guidance service does not suffice. Certain administrators indicated that in such cases, they ensure that the child is directed to a higher level of expert support.

“In cases that exceed the capabilities of the school’s guidance service, we guide them to the guidance research centres in national education directorates at the district or provincial level. If the case also exceeds their capacities, they direct the child to specialized psychologists, I guess.”

(Erzurum, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

In addition, it was understood that administrators do not consider cooperating with or receiving support from possible stakeholders from outside the school as a practical solution.



“Expert support may be sought, but how? If we bring this child to the hospital, the person taking the child to the hospital would be the mother or the father – the individuals who are involved in the incident. If we bring the child to the police station, or file a report, as we frequently see on the television – they say, this is a family matter, it’s done and over with, we have to cover it up. If you say, ‘Have you tried the Social Services?’, I, myself graduated from Social Services, in fact, but I’m not working in this field – it may work, the school may file such a report, saying ‘There is violence in so-and-so’s family’. Actually, I don’t know if an expert would come and help.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Administrators stated that students who display a tendency to become introverted and isolated are directed to sports and social activities at school in such cases:

“For our students who we think have problems, we have them concentrate on social activities so that they will mingle in society and not become isolated. For example, when there is a tour, we choose the students with problems in particular so that they are not isolated from society. In order to prevent them from isolating themselves completely from society, we try to reintroduce him/her to society instead of ignoring them.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

The Importance of Education and the School with Respect to Domestic Violence Against Women

The administrators were asked for their opinions on the role of the school and education in the measures to be taken against domestic violence against women. Some of them replied, pointing out that the activities held at school in this regard were limited. According to these administrators who agreed, educating students on these issues would not lead to a change in the desired direction – for two reasons. First, domestic violence is a private issue and, thus, it relates not to the school and the students, but to the families. Therefore, the measures that the school can take in this regard are already extremely limited. Second, these kinds of school activities would remain superficial and fail to provide the expected benefits due to concern to complete the current workload at hand. These administrators stated that the priority should be *“training of families”* rather than conducting activities aimed at students at schools.

“No matter how much we talk about adding these issues to the curriculum, since we notice the shortages in education in this respect, this turns out to be theoretical – not realistic. No matter how much importance you place on these issues, the students at the 12th grade are only concerned about the exams – they don’t think of anything else. The 9th graders are only concerned with adapting to school. I don’t think these [classes] would be enough. You could include [them] in the curriculum perfunctorily and lecture on them, but they would not attract



children's attention. Nevertheless, within the scope of a different, advanced system – such as a course similar to the one required for a driving licence – which would be a pre-marital requirement, it may be a positive attempt. It would not be realistic to say that lecturing at school would be enough.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

“A thief steals, but is the real perpetrator the thief or the system that causes [him to do it]? What we do at schools are temporary solutions. There are student activities, social clubs, etc., but this is a private matter and cannot be prevented by saying, ‘Don’t do it, you are a good man.’”

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

“A child comes to school at the age of 6. Children learn 80 per cent of their knowledge and habits between 0 and 6 years of age – they are settled in the children’s brain. Now, how much do you give them to fill the remaining portion? Once children have been ‘shaped’, it is very difficult to change them. Therefore, training of families is obligatory.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

“I don’t believe that it would solve the problem to bring ten guidance teachers to school – it should be solved in the family. Once a family has a child, they have to change their attitudes and behaviour for their child. They must avoid behaviour that would have adverse effects on the child.”

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

“The effect of environmental factors surpasses education. We are a proper educational institution, but sometimes environmental factors have more influence on the children than us. What are they? The media, the culture of the neighbourhood where the child lives... Thus, if you don’t prepare the child for such conditions as a society, individual efforts would not prove beneficial. You would make one improvement and then there would be eight negative factors on the other side – thus, there would not be any mathematical equality.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

A significant portion of the administrators stated that various activities may be held at schools aimed at educating students on issues related to domestic violence against women. Among these issues, adding domestic violence against women as a lesson to the curriculum was mentioned as a primary concern; in general, administrators believed that it would not be beneficial. Since the curriculum is already heavy, rather than adding a separate lesson to it, it would be better to include the relevant issues in other lessons. For example, the topics related to domestic violence against women may be lectured within the scope of “social sciences”, “life sciences”, “citizenship” and “religion and ethics”. In addition, the number of hours allocated to guidance lessons may be increased in order to integrate these new topics.



Administrators believed that whether the topic is to be lectured as a separate lesson or within the scope of other lessons, it should be given a format different than the classical lesson format. Students should not follow the topics lectured passively; rather, there should be plays or dramas appropriate to the students' ages, which would ensure their participation in the lesson.

"There may be a lesson involving family relationships, in other words, relationships between human beings. However, these are integrated into the lessons on life sciences, social sciences, religion and ethics, but if they would be provided as practical projects, they would be more effective. They should definitely be applied in my opinion."

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

"Environments should be provided to children where they could be productive according to their abilities. Girls must be made aware of their rights. Everyone should be informed of their rights and responsibilities. Individuals should be trained on their responsibilities. However, this training should not be limited to posters and announcements on bulletin boards. The child must be able to express himself/herself saying, 'I exist!'"

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

According to the administrators' views, these participatory lessons should include topics such as "communication", "problem-solving", "anger management", "individual rights and freedoms", "women's and children's rights", "gender equality" and "the ability to empathize". Thus, it was emphasized that the prejudices and conditioning causing boys to become perpetrators and girls to become victims of violence would be tackled from an early age.

"The primary issue regarding the prevention of boys from such acts is for them to understand that each individual has a separate value, that each individual has both legal, individual and cultural rights; in other words, each individual has a separate value in the legal and cultural sense, and no one has the right to disturb and to punish others, and that laws would be implemented to punish those who commit illegal acts. Boys should be informed and convinced that it is wrong to punish someone who has done nothing wrong, that laws should determine who is right and who is wrong, and that the punishment should be in accordance with the rules and regulations within the framework of the justice system. The ideal would be to make them embrace and adopt these considerations, in my opinion."

(Aydın, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Among the school activities, administrators mentioned the importance of cooperation of male and female students. According to their experiences, where students share the same class and the



same environment, friendship and dialogue between them would lead to sharing. For example, an administrator working at a secondary school indicated that boys and girls should carry out activities together such as “washing the dishes” and “cleaning” in classes designed in the form of a game. By supporting togetherness when raising boys and girls, their gender relationships would be established on more equal grounds and contribute to the prevention of violence.

“A girl and a boy should be able to sit together at the desk. They should overcome this issue – they should not consider the opposite sex as unreachable. Extra-curricular activities should be supported. They should be integrated into group work, for example, folk dances. For example, a boy and a girl should be able to dance the halay and realize that there is no reason to see the opposite sex as the enemy. They may work together in dramas and projects, for example, a European Union project... In other words, they should do things outside the classroom. These are social phobias, you know – admonitions such as ‘Don’t go out with the boys, someone would say something and you will suffer...’ We are a society of prohibitions. Stay away...”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

“Girls must be included in all the activities held at school – social activities, sports activities – there should be no girl/boy discrimination. When there is a volleyball tournament, girls should be included – they should also be included in soccer tournaments, basketball, drama, everything... in fact there should be an increased number of them. When it becomes like this, everyone will accept it – and then our children would know it, learn it – that there is no discrimination – girls are with us everywhere.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Administrators stated that all activities aimed at decreasing domestic violence should be based on strengthening women’s position and ensuring gender equality in Turkey. Thus, this problem would be solved through schooling of girls and their independence through having a profession. An administrator who had a daughter himself stated that he had given the advice “Be the one to choose, not [the one to be] chosen” to his children. Administrators indicated that there were improvements in this respect and that this should be continued. Some administrators said that *affirmation action* should be applied for female students if necessary.

“Rather than inclusion in curriculum or an addition of relevant topics, women should be equipped with knowledge. Whatever comes to mind... they should be privileged in terms of both knowledge and socialization. The gap should be eliminated... because the gap between them is not a matter of one or three steps... that is, men are not two or three steps ahead of women...”

(Erzurum, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)



“In my opinion, we should look at the situation from the opposite viewpoint. The woman should take precaution against becoming a victim of violence. If we try to teach this man not to use violence – but these are things that are already taught. These topics are discussed and criticized in society anyway... But if this issue is still a problem, we have to coach women – they should be able to leave the man when she sees a hand raised against her. She should be able to leave.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

“First of all, as I said before, the economic reasons... a woman should be economically independent. She should have a place to turn to for refuge in case she becomes a victim of violence from her spouse, in-laws, whomever else... Let’s say an income would be provided to this woman by the state to cover her basic needs, and also employment opportunities... Then, this woman would not have to suffer this violence. Women should have economic power. She should not be dependent on her husband or her father-in-law.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Several administrators stated that education provided at schools aimed at ensuring gender equality would not be sufficient. In struggling to provide an environment of gender equality at the schools, the family and social circles should also act accordingly. In order for social change to take place, education provided at schools should be supported through equal attitudes in families towards girls and boys. Administrators chose to express their opinions in this regard by providing examples from their own lives. Administrators, most of whom were male, stated that they were segregated from their sisters in their families as children in terms of division of labour at home, and that this was a general tendency in the Turkish society. The fact that division of labour at home is classified as ‘male duties’ and ‘female duties’ constitutes one of the elements that support gender-based discrimination in society.

“Those attitudes and behaviour that are stored in the subconscious during childhood are very important. Just as for girls, a boy should also be made to help with cooking or washing the dishes in the kitchen. If a superiority complex is formed in boys, then they might develop the sense of superiority over women [in the future] and might choose to commit violence to solve issues that they cannot solve through dialogue or other techniques. The man might resort to this in case of a lack of a solution.”

(Ankara, Middle Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Administrators stated that schools must be cleared of violence, primarily because violence is a ‘learnt attitude’. The school must be a democratic environment, and the child should be able to observe an environment free of violence at school.

It was indicated that schools undertook efforts at raising awareness among parents as well as students. Some administrators organized activities involving academics and university lecturers and others attempted to remain close to the families. Administrators stated that as long as the situation in the



family and the approach of parents do not change, there will not be any real social change, irrespective of efforts undertaken at school. Thus, it was suggested that engaged and married couples with problems should be participate in panels, seminars or courses on family training. Schools may promote such efforts and organizations to parents. Schools and Guidance Research Centres may cooperate to this effect. In addition, in particular, administrators who are assigned to schools in areas at a low socio-economic level, stated that it was difficult to cooperate with parents in this regard:

“Now, this is how domestic violence may be eliminated: first, the primary issue is education. From elementary school 1st grade – or in fact from pre-school— the importance of the family, the mother’s and father’s behaviour in family relationships, interaction with children and the roles of parents in the marriage should be taught starting from elementary school, and at secondary school, high school and even university, with visual materials on the concept of the family.”

(Aydın, Middle Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

“There is a traditional saying that education is everything – I would say family training or family communication. Seminars on these topics would be helpful... Family training – but rather, the mindsets of mothers and fathers – they should focus on the issue.”

(Ankara, Upper Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

“This family training should be increased at schools and taken seriously. In order to train parents on this topic, they should first of all be invited to the school. Our guidance teachers also conduct this kind of training, but participation remains very limited. For example, this year there was no participation.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

“This training may be provided again at schools. However, are there instructors at school? What kind of training can they provide? To what extent can they be helpful? If such a planning is carried out, it would be helpful. For example, special instructors may be assigned. They may hold meetings for the female students to inform them in how they should act. The same may be held for male students as well.”

(Erzurum, Low Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Administrators criticized the current gender roles in society and said that schools would be influential in changing these roles. In addition, it is important to keep in mind their own statements regarding gender roles. It was understood upon the analysis of the interviews that women are regarded as having the primary responsibility in raising children, since administrators emphasized the role of women as mothers, just as in society as a whole.



“First of all, our education system should accept that the woman is a divine creature. [...] My opinion is that the woman really is a mother – she is divine, she is our sister, our mother.”

(Ankara, Low Socio-Economic Level, High School, Administrator)

“Women are a blessing in my personal opinion – we have to protect them and take them under our wings. I can never understand raising a hand to a woman – they are not equal with us in terms of physical strength.”

(Erzurum, Upper Socio-Economic Level, Secondary School, Administrator)

Since women sometimes bring up boys who become violent men, they themselves may be a cause of violence. In this context, administrators criticized the current gender roles in society, on the one hand, and reinforced current gender roles through their statements regarding solutions, on the other hand.





5. Final Comments and Recommendations

5.i. Students

5.i.1. High School Students

Definition of the Family and the Roles of Women and Men

During the interviews and discussions in all the three provinces and at the three socio-economic levels, it was observed that the definitions of the family by female and male high school students were very much alike. A warm family atmosphere is one of the most emphasized features of the family according to these definitions. Adolescents feel secure in their families and want to be supported by them.

The family has a primary role in the development of the child from birth until adulthood. The students interviewed within the scope of the survey very clearly stated their expectations from the family through their definitions. While there are differences according to the area and socio-economic levels, their expressed desire for intimacy and support from family members was considered significant.

When defining the family, different topics were highlighted depending on the social and cultural pattern in the province or the socio-economic level. In areas with high socio-economic levels, it was stated that children failed to obtain their rights to participate in domestic decisions at the desired level, and the lack of communication with girls and fathers was mentioned. While there is a similarity in the definition of the family among provinces and socio-economic levels, the feelings and expectations of adolescents suggest that there are different perceptions of this issue. Very different family dynamics were shown from this study conducted in three provinces of the country among the three different socio-economic groups. Individuals with different perceptions will continue to live together in society in the future, just like today. It is highly probable that individuals will encounter differences in feelings and attitudes throughout their lives.

In defining the roles of the mother and the father in the family, the general opinion was as that the mother was responsible for housework and caring for the children, while the father was responsible for earning the income of the household. This is accepted by all the respondents. Differences were expressed by provinces and socio-economic levels in the sharing of domestic roles. While in Aydın and Ankara Provinces, the father's support in household chores when the mother works outside the home was accepted at the high socio-economic level, in Erzurum it was accepted at a much lower level.

There are certain factors that affect these views. At the high social level, since women are working, men's burden of household chores increases; i.e. in families where responsibilities are shared at home. However, whereas at the high socio-economic level, duties are shared on the basis of "rights", at the low socio-economic level, duties are shared due to "the mother's need for help". In traditional families (Erzurum and the families from the low socio-economic level in the other provinces), female and male students do not expect men to contribute to household responsibilities and do not approve of the



mother working at an income-generating job. Such a family structure causes adolescents to adopt such attitudes and behaviour patterns.

Similar trends were observed in the upbringing of girls and boys in the family. In Aydın and Ankara, some approaches support the traditional family structure, except at the high socio-economic level. It was observed that basic responsibilities of children included helping mothers. More of the adolescent girls stated that boys were not forced to do the household chores, but that the major responsibility of the girls was helping their mothers. It was emphasized that the attitude in the family became different towards girls and boys starting from childhood when responsibility sharing is taught. All of these findings suggest that, in all likelihood, the roles of mothers and fathers will continue in the coming generation in a large sector of society.

In groups of adolescent girls, sexuality was deemed the primary determinant in the formation of gender identity. They indicated that factors such as chastity and gender roles were very important as social and cultural factors during their upbringing. It was observed that various concepts regarding sexuality determined the lifestyles of young girls, such as the protection of chastity, being careful not to attract the attention of men with their clothing, and the importance of looking beautiful to men. In a significant portion of society, young girls are brought up with the pressure of chastity, and looking attractive to men and doing the housework. This causes them to think that their future roles are based on “female sexuality”. The fact that men’s chastity, appearance and sexuality were not brought up during the discussions was another interesting finding. It was observed that gender roles had been assimilated long ago in the age group interviewed, and they accepted the statement that chastity was defined for women.

Position of Women and Men in Society

The lack of equality of men and women in society was emphasized in the discussions in particular with girls. In groups of female students, great emphasis was placed on the importance of women continuing their education. They stated that inequalities between men and women in access to educational opportunities were the obstacle to gender equality. It was striking that this issue was not generally discussed in male student groups. This suggests that young boys are not sensitive about the issue of women not having access to educational opportunities.

There were, again, two different sets of opinions with regard to approval of women working in society. The traditional viewpoint is that women should not work outside the home and a contrasting viewpoint is that women’s economic independence is important. During the discussions at the low socio-economic levels in Ankara and Aydın Provinces, and at both the low and middle socio-economic levels in Erzurum, women working outside the home are not approved of. Male respondents at the high socio-economic level in Aydın Province stated that women could be successful in business. At the high socio-economic level in Erzurum Province, on the other hand, it was stated that, while women could work at jobs that suited her education, family unity should always take precedence. It is noteworthy that during most of the discussions with male groups, there was no support for women working at income-generating jobs.



Young girls, on the other hand, felt that the economic independence of women was very important. This suggests that young men do not take into consideration the need to improve women's position in society, while young girls struggle to become equal to them.

Male children felt that women should work at jobs that are suitable for them since they are physiologically weak, an opinion also supported by the girls. However, some of the respondents maintained that women should not work at jobs where she meet many people.

Another indicator of the inequality of women and men in society was shown in the opinions regarding women's permission to leave the home. During discussions at different levels, with both boys and girls, it was mentioned that women should be able to go out as freely as men. Discussion in groups of girls and boys at the high socio-economic levels centred on women's going out at night; some groups also raised the issue of their going out during the day. In both cases, women should only go outside the home if granted permission by men – this person may be the father, the brother or the husband –going out without permission is out of the question. While it is expected that women should be able to make their own decisions on their own behaviour just like men, this discussion about permission shows that men's dominance and protection over women are accepted.

All of these views suggest that youth expect that gender roles will be imitated from those learned from the parents. Female students' approaches to empowering women's level in this regard have not been observed, except in a few groups.

Definition and types of domestic violence against women

All groups initially raised the issue of physical violence when asked about the definition of violence and psychological violence. The fact that several acts and behaviour were defined as part of physical and psychological violence suggests that youth are knowledgeable on this topic. Economic violence was raised only in two groups. The fact that sexual violence was not raised without being prompted may lead to the assumption that this type of violence is deliberately neglected. This may be because the attitudes and behaviour of these students regarding sexuality have not yet been defined or they may have been shy to talk about it.

The issue of psychological violence was highly valued in the groups with girls and it was mentioned in all the groups that men's acts of psychological violence against women would hurt women tremendously. However, in male groups, no significant difference was mentioned in terms of types of violence – only the acts were listed.

During the discussions in Aydın with groups of girls and boys, students stated that they did not observe violence against women in their own circles very frequently. However, they indicated that it was frequently observed in Turkey. Significantly, in a discussion with girls at the low socio-economic level in Aydın, it was stated that violence was frequently witnessed in their family.⁶

⁶ This was a special group consisting entirely of children of families who had migrated from a province in eastern Anatolia. Most of the children were born in Aydın, however.



In Erzurum Province, while the male groups stated that violence was not observed in their own circles, actions like slapping or beating were not considered violence. Since these students perceived concepts of violence differently, they stated that violence was scarcely observed.

In Ankara Province, it was striking that domestic violence against women was not perceived as an important problem in male groups.

According to these student views, violence is a social problem that does not occur in their own surroundings, but is experienced by others. Although many acts were listed in defining violence, they stated that it did not occur frequently according to their perceptions of violence.

The causes of violence were stated as follows:

- **Personality structure of the man:** Both girls and boys consider a problematic personality structure, lack of temper control and failure to overcome stress as the reasons that underlie violence. However, according to the girls, men who are brought up witnessing violence in their families commit violence against their wives. According to the girls, men with weak personalities and who feel insufficient try to show their strength through violence. Several boys mentioned that a reason for violence was when men regarded women as their property.
- **Status of the woman:** Girls believed that women's lack of economic independence caused them to be regarded as worthless and thereby become victims of violence. In addition, most of the boys interviewed believed that women suffer from violence due to their physical weakness.
- **Disapproval of certain female behaviour:** Among the causes of violence, girls and boys mentioned the failure of women to fulfil their duties and responsibilities, refusing to perform acts requested by the husbands and issues regarding chastity. Boys added that certain female behaviour was considered to infringe on the men's area of responsibility (such as intervening in financial issues) would also cause violence.
- **Marriage structure:** Marriage at an early age and lack of familiarity of spouses were among the causes of violence stated by both girls and boys. Weak communication in the family and loss of love and respect were also cited as reasons that would cause emergence of violence.
- **Social norms and values:** Both girls and boys mentioned acts of violence against women within socially accepted norms and values. Recently, the media has had an influence on society.

Causes of violence were given in focus group discussions with girls and boys. The fact that the same causes were mentioned by both girls and boys shows that they perceive causes similarly.



Girls and boys believed that gender roles had an impact on violence against women. The cited reasons were: women's low position in the family and in society; men seeing themselves as superior and more powerful than women; society's expectations that women be subservient to men's desires; marriage not based on an agreement; and the failure to determine the expectations of the man and the woman in marriage.

The emotions of the man, the woman and the children as a consequence of violence

The woman's emotions

The girls strongly empathized with women victims of violence and deeply felt what they had undergone, defining the victims' feelings. However, some of the respondents believed that women might also feel guilty. In addition, boys believed that women would psychologically collapse and suffer negative emotions. Some male respondents stated that women who were victims of violence may think that the man is right. In both groups, negative feelings were defined and replies involving guilt or seeing men as right would be considered indications of acceptance of violence.

The man's emotions

Both girls and boys generally believed that men who commit violence against women would usually not feel remorse and would feel even more powerful. In fact, in some groups, respondents stated that these men would be free of stress, become relaxed and enjoy it. In addition, both girls and boys maintained that men who love their wives and commit violence for the first time would feel remorse. The students believed that men who commit violence against their wives continuously take violence for granted and feel comfortable doing it over and over again.

Children's emotions

Girls stated that children would have psychological problems and that their academic performances would drop. The children would withdraw from their fathers with negative feelings and feel closer to their mothers. Girls would support their mothers, withdraw from men and be afraid of getting married. Boys, on the other hand, would probably imitate their father, but might stand up against violence. During the discussion at the low socio-economic level in Aydin Province (the group of students with domestic migration), respondents whose mothers were victims of violence stated that children would have intense emotional reactions.

Some of the boys indicated that children's psychological state would be disturbed, that the father would be imitated, or that children would reject against violence. They believed that the age of the children would affect the levels of impact.



Girls valued the feelings of women and children to a great extent, and participated in the discussions in as much detail as possible. In contrast, boys did not want to talk about this.

Recommendations for preventing domestic violence against women

Suggestions for preventing violence against women were divided into two headings, as follows:

Suggestions for preventing domestic violence against women:

- **Raising the level of education in society:** By raising the level of education in society, the perception of violence and awareness raising of the concept of justice can be disseminated.
- **Raising women's status:** Women's attendance at educational institutions and their economic independence should be targeted.
- **Women's access to their rights:** Women's awareness and advocacy of their rights should be targeted.
- **Increasing awareness of violence against women:** Starting from childhood, awareness training should be provided. Training of both women and men as adults should also be targeted.
- **Planning marriage and sustaining a healthy family life:** Interventions aimed at planning marriages were suggested.

Responding to domestic violence against women

- **Attitudes of women towards violence:** The reaction of a woman following the initial incident of violence is very important. It is considered that this would affect the following course of events. The significance of her capability of objecting to violence when she first becomes victim to it was emphasized, but some of the respondents said that she would have to accept it if she has children.
- **Women seeking their legal rights:** A woman must object to violence and seek her legal rights. These rights include the right to turn to the police and obtaining a restraining order for the man. Other suggestions were ending the marriage, awareness raising efforts, and turning to the relevant institutions.
- **Increasing punishments for violent men:** More effective implementation of punishments for on men who commit violence against their wives and their disincentives should be targeted.
- **Attitudes of families:** It is important for women to continue to be supported by their families after getting married. Women who are abandoned by their families become desperate in tackling violence.



- **Supporting women's:** Women should be supported so that they may live their lives in a socially and economically independent manner.
- **Treatment of men:** Men who are psychologically ill should be treated.

The girls adopted a rights-based approach to preventing violence against women. Women would be able to protect themselves against violence by raising their status in the family and in society through proper marriage planning, and increasing awareness of violence against women and strengthening women's empowerment.

Girls believed that women should not accept violence and, following an act of violence, should seek their legal rights. They should be supported towards helping them obtain their economic independence, including by their families. It was suggested that men who commit violence against their wives should be punished and, if required, treated. This set of suggestions does not accept women living with violence. It is acknowledged that women have rights as human beings, that these rights should be defended, and that women need support in order to be empowered.

While recommendations from Aydın Province aimed primarily at ensuring women's rights, recommendations from the other provinces were related to disadvantaged issues other than women's issues. Nevertheless, in order to be able to address all sectors of society and in consideration that these groups live together in society (as in the case with the group of students at the low socio-economic level whose families migrated to Aydın), it is important that all of the suggestions be provided for society as a whole.

Boys' suggestions for preventing violence against women were grouped under two headings:

Recommendations aimed at preventing emergence of domestic violence against women:

- **Raising the level of education of society:** Raising the level of education of society would ensure raising awareness of violence.
- **Women accessing their rights:** Women should become aware of their rights through efforts undertaken at schools and within the framework of non-formal education.
- **Planning marriages and sustaining health family lives:** Marriages should be adequately planned and early marriages should be prevented. A marriage counselling institution should be established, and problematic marriages should be supported through a psychological and social approach.
- **Other suggestions:** Other suggestions included limiting alcohol consumption and improving religious education and economic conditions.



Recommendations for actions in response to domestic violence against women

- **Communicating with the family:** Families with problems should be supported, that the man and the woman by their close relatives, and an effective intervention should be undertaken to end the domestic violence.
- **Supporting women in seeking their rights.**
- **Intervention of the police forces in the incident:** This type of intervention was deemed ineffective because the violence would continue and even increase afterwards.
- **Increasing punishments for violent men:** This would also be inadequate because the problem would continue, even becoming more intense afterwards.
- **Supporting women in acquiring their economic independence:** Ensuring that women acquire their economic independence would allow them to make independent decisions.
- **Extension of protection to women:** Refuge could be sought with associations and institutions for women who are victims of violence.
- **Divorce:** Women could solve the problem of domestic violence through divorce, but this would not be a solution if the couple has children.

Boys' approaches to the issue of preventing violence against women differed by province and socio-economic level.

The most important intervention for preventing violence is raising the educational level of society. Women gaining access to their rights is again a rights-based model and one of the primary interventions for preventing violence. In all of the provinces, it was stated that a high level of education, women's access to their rights and properly planned marriages would prevent violence.

Boys' opinions regarding interventions following violence differed. Some believed that this problem could be solved by supporting women in gaining access to their rights and acquiring their economic independence and being taken under protection in order to prevent further violence. Boys' opinions differed with regard to the other suggestions. They suggested that the initial intervention would be to solve the marital conflict through dialogue between the man and the woman following an act of violence. They supported giving a second chance to married couples. On the other hand, they felt that intervention of the police forces and increasing punishment for men would increase the violence. In addition, divorce was rarely suggested by the males. They tended to seek ways to solve the problem without harming the family unity.

The boys' responses generally involved solutions that disregarded using legal rights, which suggests that they believe that intervening is useless. Their solutions did not include raising men's awareness



and basic interventions to ensure behavioural change. Together with other findings, this may suggest that males accept that gender roles should remain as they are, having expectations of change in the communication between women and men and in domestic violence committed by men.

Approaches to the Case Scenarios

As observed in examining the suggestions, the girls wanted all family decisions to be taken together. However, the boys in general preferred decisions to be taken by the men. In Ankara and Erzurum Provinces, the boys stated that the decision to have children should be taken by men. In addition, in all of the three provinces, in the case where the woman does not want sexual intercourse, it was not considered violence if the man had sexual relationships with another woman or if he forced himself on her. Male students stated that men should be the one to make all of the decisions during marriage.

5.i.2. Secondary school students

The position of women and men in society

Secondary school students' definitions of family emphasized love, trust and support. Both girls and boys provided similar definitions. In the initial years of their adolescence, secondary school students undergo the fastest phases of physical and sexual growth, and psychological and social development. In this phase, communication with the family becomes harder. Nevertheless, the feelings they expressed about the family and their definitions show that they still feel close to them, which may be interpreted as positive.

Upon examining the roles of the mother and the father in the family, it was stated that "the mother is responsible for taking care of the house and the children, while the father is responsible for working at an income-generating job". Respondents indicated that, in cases where the mother works outside the home, the father should help with the housework, which was voiced, in particular, among the low and high socio-economic levels in Aydın and Ankara Provinces. It was maintained that children also support the division of responsibilities at home, and both female and male respondents said that they helped their mother at home. This is interpreted as positive and suggests that notions regarding gender and sex have not yet become entrenched.

The opinion that women and men are not equal in society was expressed both by the female and male students. It was striking that male students in particular were of this opinion, which may suggest that they consider women at a disadvantaged position. In cases where women work outside the home at an income-generating job, on the other hand, both female and male students stated that physiological and sexual characteristics are influential in choosing the job. Female students stated that women may work at many different jobs, but that those which require physical strength would not be suitable for them. They gave examples of jobs such as secretaries, teachers, dress-makers and cleaners as those



that require little physical work, which were usually assumed by women. In Erzurum Province, some male respondents emphasized that gender roles would be influential in determining professional fields. Although respondents indicated that gender roles were not established in their own families, the fact that areas of profession were defined according to gender roles suggests that certain notions are established at a much earlier period.

Definitions of Violence

Both girls and boys defined violence correctly according to the international definitions of violence, which indicates their awareness of this issue. Their definition of violence, i.e. mostly through physical acts, could indicate that these children are witnesses of or live through violence in various environments. Reference to early marriage and alimony as violence may be accepted as an indication of their sensitivity in this respect.

While male students defined violence differently, it would be difficult to identify the acts of physical violence described during the discussions in Erzurum merely hypothetically. This suggests that children at this age group witnessed the types of violence they mentioned.

Opinions regarding the Causes of Violence in the Story on Domestic Violence Against Women

The story on domestic violence against women was used as a vehicle to learn about children's opinions on violence. After reading the first part of the story, the comments made by girls differed by province. In Aydın Province, the story was discussed with respect to women's rights. In Ankara Province, it was maintained that the man was superior and the woman had to abide by him. In Erzurum Province, it was stated that when a woman behaves in a way that her husband does not approve of, this may result in violence. In short, whereas in Aydın Province, a more developed, rights-based approach was taken, in the other two provinces, violence was accepted.

Completion of the story by the boys generated similar scenarios. Boys considered the meal not being ready as the problem in the story, while girls interpreted it as not doing what the man wanted. In Ankara, boys discussed whether this behaviour was justified. It is believed that there is a high probability of women becoming victim to domestic violence, as the children learned from their own experiences. In addition, in Erzurum Province, the idea of a family is one where the father as the authority and is always right. In Aydın Province, male and female students used a moderate problem-solving approach during a problematic situation; in Ankara Province, they felt that the man was superior and should be obeyed; and in Erzurum Province, the view was similar to the one in Ankara but with more rigid rules.

In evaluating the second part of the story, there were strong reactions among girls. In Aydın Province, the girls discussed women's rights and could not accept that the woman in the story was beaten. Nevertheless, during this discussion, there was a conflict between the view that the woman had deserved



the violence and the importance of women's rights. It was observed that children had a conflict between the sense of right and wrong, and of violence justified. This contradiction may be a result of their shift in viewpoint between concrete and abstract concepts, or from their having witnessed conflict in their environment. In short, in Aydın, the causes for violence were cited as women being unaware of their rights, alcohol consumption and gambling. The children defined acts of violence and vividly described the causes.

In the second part of the story, the female students interviewed in Ankara had different views than those held in Aydın Province. Here, the female students participated in an extremely high-level discussion that went beyond the expectations of their age group. They asserted that violence was a major problem, that boys in particular would copy acts of violence, that civil society organizations should support children and that the state had a major responsibility in this respect. The fact that the discussion was held in a metropolis may explain why these girls were so knowledgeable. However, boys in this group – depending on their age and socio-economic level – believed that violence can definitely be justified, which suggests that different factors affect their opinions. Despite sharing the same environment with the girls, the boys probably adopt norms and values related to male dominance.

In addition, in Erzurum, which has a very different social environment, female students held the opinion that "the woman's behaviour was wrong and the man was right" with reference to the second part of the story; i.e. male dominant behaviour in society was accepted by female students. A similar view was noted among male students; they believed that the man's actions can definitely be justified. Male students also cited alcohol consumption and gambling as causes of violence, as did the girls. It may be stated that social norms become established at an early age in Erzurum.

Children's emotions

Students who participated in the focus group discussions very clearly defined the emotional outcomes of such an incident. Girls expressed empathy and reflected on certain incidents. They indicated that children would have emotional problems and would fail at school. They also stated that girls would take their mother's side and withdraw from their fathers, and that boys might imitate their fathers. Male students shared similar feelings and opinions. In Erzurum, male students stated that older children should intervene in incidents of violence by protecting their mother and stopping their father. They also stated that younger children should be taken away from the scene of the incident.

Children reflected the findings obtained in several scientific studies. Research showed that children who witness incidents of violence against their mother may experience negative feelings, withdraw from their father and emulate their fathers in the future. It is notable that the respondents of the survey arrived at the same conclusions through their feelings and experiences. Children who witness or become subject to domestic violence should be monitored, treated and rehabilitated.



What if You Were the Child in the Story?

Respondents were asked how they would react if they were the child in the story. Two different solutions were put forward in the groups: to stop the father and to adopt a behaviour that would not hurt the mother. Nevertheless, being a child and therefore weak is an obstacle to protecting the mother or stopping the violence. Girls indicated that they would be upset, try to leave, and take their younger siblings with them so that they would not be affected by the incident. They also pointed out in general that they would seek help from the family elders (i.e. the parents of the mother or the father).

In addition to the girls' suggestions, the boy indicated that they would fight against their father, notify the police (secretly) during the incident, and obtain protection for their mother.

Both the girls and boys stated that they would protect the mother and the younger sibling, and stand up against the father. However, they did not hide the fact that they would feel upset. They would feel as if they were part of the problem and think of intervening to stop the violence.

Observations of Domestic Violence in Society

During the discussions with the girls, it was indicated in all the groups that they had witnessed acts of violence against women. In all of the provinces, respondents had detailed information regarding interventions in cases of violence such as seeking support from neighbours and relatives, calling the police, obtaining a temporary restraining order for the perpetrator, and turning to associations and women's shelters.

In Erzurum Province, in particular, while girls indicated that the woman would be left alone if victim of violence due to a chastity/honour-related issue, the boys stated that acts of violence were witnessed frequently, but they were covered up.

It was observed in the groups interviewed in the provinces that children witnessed acts of violence against women. Although the students indicated that there was no violence in their families, it was considered that the extensive information they know about violence would cause them to learn violence and take it for granted. It should not be ignored that children acquire and adopt certain attitudes and behaviour through social learning models.

Opinions on Methods to Prevent and Respond to Violence

Preventing domestic violence against women

The girls and boys suggested an approach based on rights in all the three provinces. It was suggested that women should know and defend their rights, and that their levels of education should be raised to this end. In addition, possible solutions put forth included building a more positive family structure and



the couple compromising when taking decisions were cited as solutions. In Erzurum Province, another suggestion was for the man to express his expectations in a more positive manner to the woman and the woman to accept these.

Responding to domestic violence against women

The girls and the boys provided various solutions: the children should intervene and solve the issue with their father; the couples should get divorced; the woman should not accept violence the first time she becomes victim of it; the man should be warned by relatives and neighbours; turning to the police; and organizing awareness-raising campaigns. However, in Ankara and Erzurum, some respondents suggested that the woman's obeying the family rules would prevent the disruption of order in the family and the recurrence of violence.

There was a striking similarity in the solutions for preventing violence proposed by young adolescents from different socio-economic levels from three different areas of the country. The suggestions from the respondents in Erzurum were more conservative and tended to accept violence, but nevertheless, the children adopted and suggested solutions aimed at preventing violence and preventing women from becoming victim to further violence. Children tended to prioritize the family structure and the rights of women, and suggested that women should be protected against violence. Here, it was considered that interventions aimed at preventing violence and protecting women should be carried out systematically.

5.ii. Psychological Counselling and Guidance Instructors

Teachers clearly stated the definition and types of violence and cited personal, socio-economic and cultural factors among its causes. A definition was developed similar to the ecological model classification of the causes of violence by the World Health Organization (WHO). However, teachers did not provide their views on state policies and practices or on the media, which determine social and cultural factors. This may be due to having examined the issue on the basis of the individual family and children only.

Children are expected to have good communication with teachers, who should notice their problems. In addition, teachers indicated that children could be monitored systematically because they only become aware of domestic violence directly or indirectly through children's appeals for help. The children from families where there is domestic violence have psychological problems and their interest in school wanes. When children with problems are referred to the guidance services, it is expected that the child would voluntarily apply for this service, since it is a volunteer service. On the other hand, it was stated that it was important for troubled children to be evaluated before being admitted to school. Since they do not show any change after they start school, their problems are not noticed. The child's willingness to seek help is fundamental in cases where their problems related to domestic violence started prior to the beginning of school.



Teachers believed that children take incidents of domestic violence for granted and accept it, and that these adolescents show different emotional reactions. Teachers indicated that some children may not turn to them for support when they are experiencing social development problems.

Interventions in the school environment may be required to ensure that students benefit from the provided psychological and social counselling and support mechanisms and services. Support systems should be developed to ensure that all children, and not only those who need it, systematically benefit from this service.

Teachers stated that they used personal interview techniques during the sessions with children and that they also wished to meet the child's family. However, teachers' overall opinion was that if the problem could not be solved in the family, it would not be possible to solve it at school. Teachers' observations and opinions in this respect are deemed valid since it is acknowledged that, in such cases, the problem cannot be solved merely through the assistance of the psychological counselling and guidance service at school. An integrated perspective must be developed to solve the issue at its root. In addition, it was observed that this perspective has not been realized at the teacher level.

Teachers remarked on the negative aspects of their living and working conditions, which caused interruptions in the provision of the psychological counselling and guidance services at school. The lack of sufficient numbers of psychological counselling and guidance instructors at the schools should be considered a major problem. Thus, a systematic service provision model is required to reach children with problems or at risk, and to prevent them from enduring more serious problems in the future.

5.iii. School Administrators

School administrators had sufficient knowledge on the definition and types of violence. Administrators are knowledgeable about society but cannot be informed of domestic violence as long as they are not informed by the family or the child. They stated that students who have problems at school are identified by teachers and reported to them. The overall opinion of the administrators was that domestic violence against women is not the responsibility of the school but that incidents of violence against children are.

Administrators clearly explained the causes for domestic violence against women. While they classified the social, relational and personal factors adequately, it was interesting that they made no comment on social policies and the media, which may be influential on society. In this group, it may be also considered that the issue was examined rather with reference to individual family matters.

The administrators stated that children who witness domestic violence against women in their families have psychological problems. These children's communication with their friends and teachers was adversely affected and they had behavioural disorders. Further, it was observed that these children also commit disciplinary offences. Children whose academic performance drops or who have problems are referred to the psychological counselling and guidance service, where they receive support. Directing these children to sports and cultural activities is among the practices adopted. The school attempts at



helping children solve their problems when these psychological and social problems are observed. If the problem exceeds their capabilities, they refer the child to the guidance research centres, but no detailed information was provided concerning the later stages of counselling support for the children.

School administrators stated that this problem, which has adverse effects on the academic performance of the child, is more of a private issue and that it is not part of the school's responsibility. Nevertheless, all kinds of obstacles that have negative influences on a child's learning process must be eliminated. Therefore, since it is acknowledged that schools do not have the capabilities for solving the problem of violence against women, the lack of cooperation with social institutions working on solving this problem may be considered a shortcoming.

Administrators must develop an approach for supporting children's psychological development and solving their problems within the competence of the school's health efforts that influence the academic success of children. It is acknowledged that children become more successful at school through the collaboration between the school, the student, the instructor and the family.

Administrators suggested that topics on preventing violence against women be included in the curriculum and that training aimed at developing children's communication skills be held at the schools. Such programmes would definitely increase children's knowledge and skills.

Administrators also commented on the issue of gender. They believed that schools could play a role in solving this social problem. They suggested that certain skills may be improved by including gender training in the school curricula. Nevertheless, they expressed their concern that the efforts made at the schools would prove unsustainable if the problem continued in society.

It was observed that administrators disregarded the rights-based approach in certain situations with regard to both gender and violence against women during the discussions. Professionals are required to ignore their own personal attitudes and perceptions on these issues while fulfilling their duties. Since it there was just a short period of time, during the survey, the attitudes and behaviour of the administrators was not observed fully. However it should be underlined that, if the personal perceptions and attitudes of the administrators contradict the right-based approach, then a threat may arise.





6. Recommendations for preventing domestic violence against women

The main suggestions derived from this study aiming at preventing domestic violence against women were as follows:

1. Strengthening the family structure

The importance of the family for the youth was one the most commonly expressed views. They maintained the importance of the family in terms of their development and provided suggestions for protecting it. In addition, lack of communication in the family and improperly planned marriages were cited among the causes of violence. Thus, in line with the suggestions of the youth, mechanisms for supporting marriages would be required since their start. This support, which may start with pre-marital counselling, should be continued throughout the marriage, and concern issues such as deciding on whether to have a child, bringing up children and solving family problems.

2. Improving gender equality

Another issue extensively elaborated on by the students, teachers and administrators was gender inequality and the need to further strengthen efforts to eliminate it. In this regard, interventions for raising the status of women should be accelerated and should be supported by men. While this study does not represent the nation as a whole, it is important to note that adolescent boys adopted a traditional family structure in terms of their expectations of women in the family and in society; the lack of support for women's economic independence may be a risk for future generations. Therefore, efforts are especially needed to involve male youth.

3. Defining the perception of violence

While violence was fully defined by all of the groups, some views emerged that women may at times behave in such a way as to deserve it. Throughout the survey, a change was observed, especially in male high school students' perception of violence. Youth should be taught that the attitude to violence as justified is wrong, and that a justice-based communication system must be established. This may only be achieved through good role models. Schools should be considered as the institutions that would set an example in this respect. In addition, programmes are also needed for greater understanding of issues of violence in society through various means of communication.



4. Reinforcing the system for combating violence

Recently, several efforts have been in progress in Turkey to support women victims of violence. Youth are informed of these efforts and have included them in their own set of solutions. Nevertheless, in particular, male high school students believed that interventions involving punishing violent men would prove unsuccessful. While this may be a male defence mechanism, it may also be based on observations.

Youth must have faith in a system that functions effectively and consistently. Therefore, the system to prevent women from being victims of further violence must be reinforced; women must be protected against their violent perpetrators and be empowered so that they can live independently. An effective system that the youth can trust would help them to find adequate solutions to this problem of violence.

5. Protecting children who witness acts of violence

During all the discussions and interviews, it was stated that children would live through psychological problems if they witnessed domestic violence against women in their families. It was emphasized that these children with psychological problems would be unsuccessful academically and become unhappy and would also face problems in the future. Girls would have difficulty in their communications with men, and boys would tend to commit violence.

Children who witness violence should be supported in the family or at school. At schools, these children should be identified as soon as possible through a system of prioritization and monitoring, rather waiting for the child to seek help. This may only be achieved with a regular school health programme. In this system, when schools detect children with problems, they should contact social workers to support the children's families in solving their problems. Social workers should offer support and carry out interventions aimed at empowering women and stopping domestic violence, without waiting for the women concerned or her close relatives to seek help.

The problems of young children who are yet not at the school age, on the other hand, may be determined during regular medical checkups, which would require communication between the healthcare system and social workers system.

6. Recommendations regarding the academic curricula and the role of the school

Efforts aimed at strengthening the academic curriculum should include the subject of domestic violence against women. Rather than adding new lessons to the curriculum on this topic, there should be units on *communication, problem solving, temper control, individual rights and freedoms, women's and children's rights, gender equality and empathy* within appropriate lessons.

Two issues should be highlighted in this respect. First, these lessons should be presented in such a way as to encourage students' participation. These topics should not be taught in lectures where students



passively follow what is being told; rather, they should be presented through performances such as games or plays suitable to the students' ages to ensure their participation. The use of audio-visual materials such as slides and films would prove effective. It is also recommended that the number of psychological counselling and guidance lessons be increased at schools. The second important issue is to include these topics in the academic curriculum at as early a grade as possible, since social patterns become entrenched in children's minds at very early ages. Prejudices and conditioning that cause girls to become victims of violence may only be approached in this way.

The number of psychological counselling and guidance instructors and teachers who will conduct these efforts at school should be increased to ensure that they fulfil their duties properly. These instructors and teachers should participate in continuous professional training so that they will have the required skills and qualifications, and follow up-to-date developments. Seeking help from experts from outside the school with the purpose of discussing the above-mentioned topics should be made possible or facilitated.

Taking into consideration the role of the school in the struggle against domestic violence against women, it is necessary to ensure communication between the school and the other institutions to solve the relevant problems arises. The communication and linkages would contribute towards providing the basis for the cooperation of schools and other stakeholders working on this topic.





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Annexes

ANNEX 1

SURVEY ON ATTITUDES YOUTH TOWARDS THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Personal Information

- Please introduce yourself briefly. What are your age, education, home town and marital status?
- Where and for how long have you worked until now?
- How long have you been an administrator? For how long have you been working here, both in the province and the school?
- How many students are there in the school? How many departments are there? How many teachers do you have? How many are female and how many are male? How many psychological counselling and guidance instructors are there? Do you think that the number of your psychological counselling and guidance instructors is sufficient for dealing with the problems of the students?

General Information on the Workplace

- Please provide us with brief information on your school, province and geographical area. Describe the social structure of the people living here? What do they do? How are their economic conditions?
- Do you think that there is domestic violence against women in this province? Could you please tell us about the degree of such incidents – the types of violence and its frequency? Is there any type of violence that is typical of this place or that is frequently witnessed?
- Are there any students who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence against women among your students? If so, how is this reflected on their academic life? What kind of efforts are you taking to help them?
- Are there any concrete examples that you can tell us about?
- In line with your administrative decisions, would there be any difference in whether a teacher is female or male? What do you do if and when a female teacher whose child is sick wants to take leave? What do you do if and when a male teacher whose child is sick wants to take leave?
- How are the attitudes of female and male teachers among themselves?



Recommendations for Solutions to Domestic Violence against Women

- What are the causes for domestic violence against women, in your opinion? How would you eliminate them? What kind of measures should be taken?
- What can be done to prevent students/youth who experience or have experienced domestic violence against women in their families from being adversely affected by it?
- What kind of efforts can be made to prevent boys from committing violence against women in the future, in your opinion? What kind of efforts can be made to ensure that girls can protect themselves from acts of violence? What can the schools do as part of these efforts? What suggestions would you have for them – e.g. providing training, adding lessons or units to the curricula?

Is there anything else you wish to add with respect to this subject?

Thank you.



ANNEX 2

SURVEY ON ATTITUDES OF YOUTH TOWARDS THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE INSTRUCTORS/TEACHERS

Personal Information

- Please introduce yourself briefly. What are your age, education, hometown and marital status?
- How long have you been a psychological counselling and guidance instructor/teacher? For how long have you been working here, both in the province and in the school? Where and for how long did you work previously?
- What are your duties and responsibilities as a psychological counselling and guidance instructor/teacher? What kind of pedagogical activities do you carry out with students?

Opinions on Domestic Violence against Women

- Do you think that there is domestic violence against women in this area where the school is located? Would you please tell us about the degree of such incidents – the types of violence and their frequency? Is there any type of violence that is typical of this place or which is frequently witnessed? What can you tell us about domestic violence against women in the province?
- Do you have any students who experience or have experienced domestic violence in their families? How do they approach the issue of domestic violence against women – what are their feelings, opinions and attitudes about it?
- How does this impact on the academic life of the student? What kind of efforts do you make to help these students?
- Are there any concrete examples that you can tell us about?
- Do you think female and male teachers are treated the same in your school? Can you provide us with any concrete examples?
- What are the attitudes of female and male teachers towards each other in your school?



Suggestions for Solutions to Domestic Violence against Women

- What are the causes for domestic violence against women, in your opinion? How would you eliminate them? What kind of measures should be taken?
- What can be done to prevent students/youth who experience or have experienced domestic violence against women in their families from being adversely affected by it?
- What kind of efforts can be undertaken in order to prevent boys from committing violence against women in the future, in your opinion? What kind of efforts can be undertaken in order to ensure that girls can protect themselves from acts of violence? What can the schools do within the scope of these efforts? What are your suggestions, for example, providing training, additional lessons or units added to the curricula, or undertaking other efforts?
- What should be the role of a psychological counselling and guidance instructor/teacher to prevent and detect violence, and to rehabilitate the affected child?

Is there anything else you want to add with respect to this subject?

Thank you.



ANNEX 3

SURVEY ON ATTITUDES OF YOUTH TOWARDS THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR 6TH TO 8TH GRADERS

Reading and understanding the story

- Let's first briefly get acquainted (we introduce ourselves). Now, please, would each of you introduce yourselves briefly – how old are you, how many siblings do you have, what do your parents and siblings do, etc.?
- In your opinion, what does a family mean? What are the duties and responsibilities of the family members? What are the duties and responsibilities of women and men in society?

Now I will read you a short story and I would like to hear what you think about it.

12-year-old is a 7th grader. She has two brothers, three and eight years old. Aylin's mother is a housewife and her father is self-employed, working with his brother. One day when Aylin and her eight-year-old brother returned from school, they saw that their mother was very upset. Their little brother was crying incessantly. Afterwards, when they saw their father, they realized that he was very angry.

The two children tried to learn what had happened at home that day. After seeing her [older] children to school, their mother went to their neighbour to have tea, taking their little brother along. Several other ladies also came to visit their neighbour and they sat together and chatted. After returning home, their mother fed their brother and put him to sleep, and afterwards, she tidied up the house and started cooking.

Their father did not want his wife to see and visit their neighbours, and he occasionally called her on the phone at home to check on her. That day, their father had called their mother on the phone to check on her again and, when nobody answered; he decided to come home early. When their father came home, he wanted his supper immediately, but their mother told him that supper was not ready yet. When their father asked her why she was late, she told him that she had gone to their neighbour's house to have tea and that she had done the other chores when she came back.

Discussion questions:

Questions regarding the definition of violence:

- What struck your attention in this story and why?
- What is violence, in your opinion? Which acts involve violence and which do not?
- In your opinion, is there violence in this story or not?



Additional questions that may be asked during the discussion: In your opinion, which acts of the father would be defined as violent and which wouldn't?

Questions regarding the children's emotions:

- What do you think Aylin and her brothers felt?

Questions regarding the prevention of and methods for responding to violence:

- How should Aylin's parents have solved their problem? Do you have any suggestions?
- In this family, how can the father be stopped from committing violence against the mother?
- What should the parents do after this incident in order not to live through a similar problem again?

Personal Experiences:

- Do you witness such incidents in your surroundings?
- What happens when such incidents occur in your surroundings? What do the families do after such incidents? Do the neighbours intervene? Is it reported to the police, or does it remain within the family?
- With regard to Aylin, who has witnessed this incident, what should she do? What would you do if you were in her shoes?

This is all for now – are there any other points that you would like to add?

Thank you.



ANNEX 4

SURVEY ON ATTITUDES YOUTH TOWARDS THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR 9TH TO 12TH GRADERS

Getting acquainted

Let's first get acquainted. Please introduce yourselves briefly – how old are you, how many siblings do you have, what do your parents and siblings do, etc.?

1. How would you define a family? What are the duties and responsibilities of the family members, especially those of the mother and the father? What are the duties and responsibilities of women and men in society?
2. How would you define domestic violence against women?
3. Which behaviour would be considered violent?
4. Could you please provide examples for physical, sexual and psychological and social violence? Why do these acts and behaviour involve violence?

The number of replies may be increased by giving more examples in addition to the replies received. If there is no reply, the issue will be opened for discussion again after explaining physical violence as "hitting", sexual violence as "touching the person against her will" and psychological and social violence as "insults".

5. How do you think a woman who has become victim of violence would feel?
6. How do you think a man who commits violence would feel?
7. How do you think children who witness domestic violence against women in their families would feel?
8. How do you think domestic violence against women could be prevented?
9. What should be done to stop domestic violence against women in families?

Now, I will read to you some examples and I would like to hear your opinion.

- How do couples decide on having children – when and how many? If the man wants to have children but the woman does not to, would she have a child anyway? If the woman wants a child and the man does not, would she have the child anyway? Would the decision to have children against the partner's will be considered as committing an act of violence? Why?



- Certain birth control methods may be used in order not to have children. Some of these are used by women and some by men. (Use of certain methods such as an intra-uterine device may cause lumbar pain and excessive menstrual bleeding in women.) What do you think about the man deciding on the woman's using a method that she does not want to use? Would this be considered violence? Why?
- In a marriage, the man and the woman have a sexual life. If the man wants to have sex, the couple would have sex although the woman may not want it. What do you think about this? Would this be considered as perpetration of violence? Why?
- A woman who cannot have a child needs to be continuously taken to the doctor. This woman fails to fulfill her marital responsibilities. What do you think about these statements – would you please explain this to us?

This is all for now – is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you.



ANNEX 5

Table 4: Distribution of the number of students who participated in focus group discussions at secondary schools and high schools, by socio-economic level and gender

Provinces	No. of Students Interviewed at Secondary Schools							
	Low Socio-Economic Level		Middle Socio-Economic Level		High Socio-Economic Level		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Ankara	8	8	8	8	8	8	24	24
Erzurum	8	8	8	8	8	8	24	24
Aydın	16	0	0	16	8	8	24	24
Sub-total	32	16	16	32	24	24	72	72
	No. of Students Interviewed at High Schools							
	Low Socio-Economic Level		Middle Socio-Economic Level		High Socio-Economic Level		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Ankara	8	6	7	7	10	8	25	21
Erzurum	8	8	8	6	8	8	24	22
Aydın	8	8	16	0	0	16	24	24
Sub-total	24	22	31	13	18	32	73	67
Total	56	38	47	45	42	56	145	139

