

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAW) - a vexed topic.

“Violence Against Women and Girls (VAW) is a vexed topic, the reality of which affects many Jamaican households on a daily basis. Violence against these vulnerable populations is an experience that cuts across language barriers, geographical borders, religion, skin colour, education and socio-economic status. VAW remains an untold story because of the stigma associated with it, and in far too many cases victims and their families suffer in silence. But it is the tell-tale scars of diminished self-esteem, intimidation, the visible cuts and bruises, the withdrawal, the suicides and murders, escapism, modern day slavery and prostitution that invariably alert us to the fact that something is wrong - terribly, terribly wrong”, so says Dr. Denise Chevannes, Executive Director, National Family Planning Board.

She encouraged the society to have a clearer understanding of the issues based on empirical evidence that will allow for the further grasp of what is happening in local communities. Armed with the understanding her wish is for communities to be spurred into action to and engage in a more active role in the prevention efforts.

The Executive Director opined that “As a society we need to ask ourselves what is it that we need to do with the information we receive from various sources.” In making the call for action the head of the sexual and reproductive agency said “Having identified the vulnerable women and girls, and the forms of violence that they face, we need to support agencies and communities that provide more effective services to these populations.”

The call is also for Jamaica’s people to grow intolerant to VAWG as from a sexual and reproductive health perspective it can result in unplanned pregnancies, increased STI or HIV transmission, low birth weight babies, depression, substance abuse, to highlight a few consequences all of which affect a woman or girl’s quality of life.

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