



Christian Conference of Asia

Ecumenical Women's Action Against Violence (EWAAV)

11-15 November 2025 | Chiang Mai, Thailand

Concept Note

Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference (AEWC) -2025

Theme: "For Such a Time as This": Towards Ending Violence Against Women in Asia'

The Context

Despite global commitments to gender equality, women continue to face systemic discrimination, violence, economic disempowerment, and exclusion. Violence against women remains pervasive. One in three women worldwide experiences violence in various forms. Violence against women is a human rights violation, and the immediate and long-term consequences of such violations can be devastating. Violence negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. It impacts their dignity as individuals, within their families, communities, and the country at large. There are innumerable reasons for the intensifying violence against women in Asia, such as deeply rooted cultural perceptions, rigid social norms, and oppressive systemic structures that undermine women's dignity and place them in increasingly precarious and vulnerable situations. Often shaped by patriarchal traditions, prevailing religious or cultural interpretations have reinforced the systemic marginalisation of women within both the Church and society, and have long determined their status and roles in many Asian contexts.

The deplorable situations of women in different Asian countries vary. In Pakistan, the forced conversion of young girls and young women from religious minorities to Islam has become a disturbingly common trend. In India, crimes against women reached their highest in 2022, with a 26.35% increase over six years. Bangladesh records some of the highest rates of violence against women in the world. More than half, about 54%, of married or previously married women in Bangladesh reported experiencing physical or sexual violence from their spouse at least once during their lifetime, far exceeding the global average of 30%. In Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Defence reported an escalation of domestic violence against women and girls, with one in five (20.4%) women in partnerships having endured physical and/or sexual abuse from their intimate partners. In Myanmar, the military coup has exacerbated longstanding patterns of abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence, while further undermining the economic, social, and cultural rights of women and girls. Furthermore, the implementation of the conscription law has forced many young women to flee to neighbouring countries using any means necessary to avoid forced recruitment.

In Indonesia, gender-based violence continues to rise alarmingly, with recent reports highlighting a significant rise in intimate femicide cases. Similarly, Malaysia is witnessing a troubling increase in cases of gender-based violence, including domestic abuse, assaults, mistreatment of domestic workers, child abuse, violations of decency, and sex crimes. In the Philippines, the 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) reported that 17.5% of Filipino women aged 15 to 49 had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence from their intimate partners. Online sexual violence and harassment also remain widespread, including blackmail and threats to circulate intimate images and videos, lewd

messaging, voyeurism, sexual assault, cyber pornography involving minors, and trafficking for sexual exploitation. In Cambodia, one in five women reported experiencing physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner, while more than one-third of men admitted to having perpetrated such violence.

In South Korea, women account for more than half of all reported homicide victims, one of the highest gender ratios for such incidents worldwide. Reports from the South Korean Supreme Prosecutor's Office indicated that, in the year 2019, 90% of violent crime victims were women—a significant increase from 71% in 2000. Additionally, digital sex crimes have surged, impacting the lives of thousands of women. In the case of Japan, according to data published by the Gender Equality Bureau in 2022, about 60% of consultations involved psychological domestic violence, with about 1 in 4 women having experienced violence/abuse from their spouses, and 1 in 21 married women stating that they were living with serious, life-threatening fears. In Taiwan, women accounted for 80% of the victims in sexual assault cases, while men represented 85% of the offenders, according to the Department of Protection Services. In reports of domestic abuse, women made up 66% of the victims, whereas men accounted for 73% of the perpetrators.

The Role of Faith Communities

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) has consistently affirmed that upholding and respecting women's dignity and rights leads to a more inclusive, just, and peaceful society. CCA has been addressing the concerns of ending violence against women and promoting a collective commitment to address inequality, discrimination, and abuse. Confronting these persistent challenges that impede efforts to address gender-based violence is an imperative for churches and faith-based organisations committed to ending violence against women. Through the Ecumenical Women's Action Against Violence (EWAAV) programme, CCA aims to further its efforts in expanding the capacities of women, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to lead programme initiatives and advocacy efforts towards the empowerment of women at all levels, enabling them to be advocates of combating violence against women. Engaging churches in the commitment to building a gender-just society always remains a priority.

CCA affirms that faith-based organisations and churches have the responsibility and the opportunity to recognise, support, and amplify women's voices at all levels of leadership. Empowering women is not only a developmental imperative but also a theological one. Women can engage in advocacy, influence policy, and lead community transformation more effectively when equipped with theological, political, and practical tools.

The advocacy for women's dignity must go beyond symbolic gestures and address the structural conditions that prevent women from living with safety, freedom, and opportunity. Women must be present where decisions are made—whether in the pulpit, local councils, or national parliaments. Faith communities must champion women's leadership and provide platforms for them to speak, organise, and lead. This regional women's consultation seeks to unite ecumenical leaders, faith-based organisations, and women's rights advocates to strengthen collective advocacy efforts grounded in faith and justice.

Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference-2025

The Christian Conference of Asia has initiated programmes with a focus on Ecumenical Women's Action Against Violence (EWAAV) since 2016. Various regional, sub-regional, and national ecumenical women's conferences, consultations, and workshops were organised and facilitated by CCA over the past ten years.

Ecumenical Women's Action Against Violence (EWAAV) Programmes 2016-2025

During the past one decade, ever since CCA initiated the EWAAV as part of its involvement in 2016 CCA has organised various programmes and activities in this specific area: Chiang Mai, Thailand (2016); Dhaka, Bangladesh (2017), Bangkok, Thailand, (2017), Vientiane, Laos PDR (2017), Colombo, Sri Lanka (2017); Phnom Penh, Cambodia (2018), Bangkok, Thailand (2018); Raiwind, Pakistan (2019), Hsinchu, Taiwan (2019); Webinar on The Impact of Covid-19 on Women in Asia (2020), Webinar on The Impact of Growing Religious Extremism on Women in Asia (2020), Webinar on Transformational Leadership of Women in a Post-Covid 19 World (2021), Regional Online Consultation on 'Ensure Gender Equality; Empower Women and Lift Up Humanity(2021); National Consultation on EWAAV Timor Leste (2022), South Asia Sub Regional Consultation on EWAAV, Colombo, Sri Lanka (2022); Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly, Kerala, India (2023); Regional Consultation on Gender Based-Violence and Forced Migration, Bangkok, Thailand (2024), National Consultation on EWAAV, Phnom Penh, Cambodia (2025)

Ten years after consistent engagement with Asian women, the CCA is now organising an Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference (AEWC-2025) to review the past initiatives, reaffirm commitments, and further strengthen women's participation in ecumenical advocacy to end violence against women in Asia. The Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference-2025 will be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 12 to 14 November 2025. Churches and ecumenical organisations are invited to send their representatives to be part of the Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference-2025.

Theme: "For Such a Time as This" Towards Ending Violence Against Women in Asia.

Drawing on the biblical and theological undergirding of Esther 4, the AEWC-2025 will address the emerging contexts of violence against women in Asia, enabling and motivating participants to be changemakers in confronting these challenges. This particular verse signifies that a specific situation or moment requires a specific, decisive response, and it suggests that a person's position or circumstances have been provided by God for a particular purpose or to accomplish a greater goal. The story of Esther is a reminder of how God has placed people in definite situations for God's ultimate purpose, and it emphasises the unique and urgent nature of a particular moment, calling for a decisive action and response. It also challenges individuals and communities to recognise their God-given roles and to act courageously in their given circumstances, especially for people to embrace their potential to make a difference during challenging times, and to find meaning and purpose in responding to current circumstances, even in difficult or unforeseen situations. As the story of Esther is a call for courageous and strategic action, it can motivate and inspire many women who are called to speak truth to power and stand as agents of justice. Amidst the realities of systemic violence, inequality, oppression, marginalisation, and persecution, bold and faithful action of witness will usher in transformation.

The Ecumenical Women's Action Against Violence (EWAAV) programme of CCA provided a platform for dialogue, solidarity, mutual learning, and collaboration over the past ten years. As part of its ongoing commitment, the AEWC-2025 seeks to harness the church's capacity toward advocacy for women's dignity and rights. By bringing together representatives of Asian churches and ecumenical organisations, the AEWC-2025 hopes to increase the advocacy efforts for a strengthened impact and cultivate a shared commitment to combat violence against women and ensure gender justice.

Objectives

- To deepen understanding of the biblical and theological basis for women's dignity and rights.
- To share regional experiences and challenges in ecumenical advocacy for gender justice.
- To develop strategic, context-sensitive advocacy frameworks and action plans.
- To foster regional partnerships and networks for ongoing collaboration.

Key Themes and Topics

- Theological reflections and women's leadership.
- Ecumenical responses to gender-based violence.
- Participation and leadership opportunities for women.
- Intersectionality: addressing the rights of marginalised women.
- Advocacy tools and strategies in ecumenical settings.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased theological and practical knowledge among participants.
- Strengthened regional ecumenical networks for women's advocacy.
- Concrete advocacy strategies and commitments to gender justice
- Empowered women leaders recognised as agents of justice in their communities.

Target Participants

- Women leaders and advocates from faith-based organisations.
- Ecumenical church leaders and theologians.
- Representatives from regional and national women's rights groups.
- Youth and grassroots faith activists.

Venue and Date

The AEWC-2025 will be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 12 to 14 November 2025. Participants are expected to arrive on the evening of 11 November 2025 and depart on the morning of 15 November 2025.

Board and lodging

The CCA will cover the costs of board and lodging for all participants for four nights. Check-in will begin at 2:00 PM on 11 November, and check-out will be at 12:00 PM on 15 November 2025. Any additional expenses incurred for extended stays beyond the official programme duration will be the responsibility of the participants.

Travel Subsidy

Limited international travel subsidies are available for participants from South and Southeast Asian countries upon request. Participants from South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia are kindly encouraged to make their own travel arrangements and to seek sponsorship

through their respective churches or organisations, or self-sponsor their participation. However, CCA will be responsible for their board, lodging, and local transportation in Chiang Mai.

Applications must be completed and submitted to the CCA Secretariat no later than 2 October 2025.

For any enquiries, please contact CCA via email ef-cca@cca.org.hk.