

Role of Education in Eradication of Violence Against Women

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Introduction:

"Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace".

— Kofi Annan, United Nations General Assembly, New York, 5-9 June, 2000.

Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of human rights. Its impact ranges from immediate to long-term multiple physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls, including death. It negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. Violence not only has negative consequences for women but also their families, community and country at large. Women's rights are inherent in nature and guaranteed by law. Therefore, violence against women is contrary to fundamental human rights, equity, natural justice and good governance.

Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide, in all socio-economic and educational classes. The United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Elimination of violence Against Women (1993) defines violence against women as, "any act of gender based violence that results 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 private life".

In the broad sense, violence against women is any violation of a women's personhood, mental or physical integrity, or freedom of movement through individual acts and societal oppression. It includes all the ways our society objectifies and oppresses women.

Objectives:

The major objectives of the study are:

- a) To know about the violence against women.

b) To find out how education helps in reducing violence against women.

Sources of Data:

The data are collected from the secondary sources like textbooks, various articles, periodicals, internet, etc.

Kinds of Violence against women:

Violence against women intersects with multiple forms of discrimination. While violence against women is universal, its manifestations and women's personal experiences of it are shaped by factors such as economic status, race, class, religion, etc. Violence against women remains hidden in the culture of silence.

Violence against women can take many forms- physical, psychological and economic. These forms of violence are interrelated and affect women from before birth to old age. Some types of violence are rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, honour killing, dowry, trafficking, cross national boundaries, etc. The different kinds of violence against women are discussed below:

1) Rape: Rape is a type of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse, which is initiated by one or more persons against another person without that person's consent.

a) Marital Rape: Marital rape, also known as spousal rape, is non-consensual sex perpetrated by victim's spouse.

b) Custodial Rape: Custodial Rape implies rape committed by a police officer within the limits of the police station in a station house, or on a woman in his custody or in custody of a police officer subordinate to him. It also includes rape committed by a public servant who takes advantage of his official position and commits rape on a woman in his custody.

2) Honour Killing: Honour killing is a common form of violence against women in certain parts of the world. In honour killings, women and girls are killed by family members (usually husbands, fathers, uncles or brothers) because the women are believed to have brought shame or dishonour upon the family. These killings are a traditional practice, believed to have originated from tribal customs where an allegation against a woman can be enough to defile a family reputation.

3) Dowry related violence: The custom of dowry is the trigger of many forms of violence against women. Bride burning is a form of violence against women in which a bride is killed at home by her husband's family due to dissatisfaction over the dowry provided by her family. Dowry death refers to the phenomena of women and girls being killed or committing suicide due to disputes regarding dowry. Dowry violence is common in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. In India, in 2011, alone, the National Crime Records Bureau reported 8,618 dowry deaths while unofficial figures suggest to the numbers to be at least three times higher.

4) Early Marriage: Early marriage especially without the consent of the girl, is another form of human rights violation. Early marriage followed by multiple pregnancies can affect the health of women.

5) Female Genital Multination (FGM): FGM is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as, "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for non medical reasons". According to a 2013 UNICEF report, 125 million women and girls in Africa and the Middle- East have experienced FGM.

6) Breast Ironing: Breast ironing (also known as "breast flattening") is the practice of pounding and massaging the breasts of a pubescent girl, using hard or heated objects, in an attempt to try to make them stop developing or disappear. It is typically carried out by the girl's mother with the aim of making the girl less sexually attractive to men and boys, so that her virginity is preserved. Breast ironing is very painful and can have negative emotional and physical consequences.

7) Sexual Harassment: Sexual Harassment is abusive, uninvited and unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature, typically in the work or studying place, which may include intimidation, bullying or coercion of a sexual nature, or the inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favours. It can be verbal or physical, and it is often perpetrated by a person in a position of authority against a subordinate.

8) Forced sterilization and forced abortion: Forced sterilization and forced abortion are forms of gender based violence. These procedures are reported to be practiced in countries such as Uzbekistan and China.

9) Widow related violence: A widow is a woman whose spouse has died. In some parts of the world, widows are subjected to serious forms of abuse, often fuelled by traditional practices such as widow inheritance. The sacrifice of widows (such as sati) has been prevalent historically in various cultures especially in India. Although Sati in India is today an almost defunct practice, isolated incidents have occurred in recent years, such as the 1987 Sati of Roop Kanwar, as well as several incidents in rural areas in 2002 and 2006.

10) Acid Throwing: Acid throwing, also called acid attack, or vitriol age, is defined as the act of throwing acid on the body of a person "with the intention of injuring or disfiguring out of jealousy or revenge". Perpetrators of these attacks throw acid at their victims, usually at their faces, burning them, and damaging skin tissue, often exposing and sometimes dissolving the bones. The long term consequences of these attacks include blindness and permanent scarring of the face and body. Acid attacks are often connected to domestic disputes, including dowry disputes and refusal of a proposal for marriage, or of sexual advances.

11) Human Trafficking and forced prostitution: Human trafficking refers to the acquisition of persons by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. Because of the illegal nature of trafficking, reliable data on its extent is very limited. Forced prostitution is prostitution which takes place as a result of coercion by a third party. In forced prostitution, the party/parties who forced the victim to be subjected to unwanted sexual acts exercise control over the victim.

Role of Education in Eradication of Violence against Women:

Violence against women and girls is rooted in gender-based discrimination and social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence. Given the devastating effect violence has on women, efforts have mainly focused on responses and services for survivors. However, the best way to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place by addressing its root and structural causes.

The way out of gender discrimination is women empowerment. This involves the strengthening of the individual and collective abilities of women for positive action. Women empowerment will lead to a balanced partnership of both sexes. By many measures, the status of women and girls has improved significantly over the last 50 years.

Education is one of the most powerful instruments to eliminate violence against women. Education is important for everyone, but it is especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is an entry point to other opportunities, but also because the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generation. Education is an indispensable means of unlocking and protecting other human rights by providing the scaffolding that is required to secure good health, liberty, security, economic well-being and participation in social and political activity.

Girls who have been educated are likely to marry later and to have smaller and healthier families. Then the maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rates are automatically decreases.

By promoting gender equality in schools and wider access to education helps to reduce violence against women. It has been proven from time to time again that girls enrolled in school are less likely to be marriage early and become pregnant.

Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children. Education helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them. Violence stops women accessing their most basic rights- to safety, health, schooling and work.

Education creates awareness regarding the various human rights, and women's rights through which women can build self-confidence inside them and they become more aware and active regarding their own rights. However, women's literacy rates are significantly lower than men's in most developing countries. Now-a-days, women achieve higher rates of literacy and education than earlier time. The most notable thing that came across in the 2011 census is the *sharp rise in the literacy of female over males*. According to the census report 2011 the female literacy rate is 65.46% against 82.14% of male literacy rate. Especially in Assam the female literacy rate is 67.3% against 78.8% of male literacy rate.

The women have increased per-capita income and risen to prominent roles in professional and political spheres. Education helps in encouraging the exchange of national, regional and international best practices for eradication of violence against women.

"Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in development process" (ICPD Programme of Action)

Conclusion:

Changing peoples' attitude and mentality towards women will take a long time at least a generation, many believe, and perhaps longer. Nevertheless, raising awareness of the issue of violence against women, and educating partners in life, in the development of a society and in the attainment of peace are just as important as taking legal steps to protect women's rights as human rights are indeed fundamental to societal growth and well-being. Gender inequality, discrimination and violence are anathema to human existence, healthy relationships and developments. Ignorance contributes to gender discrimination and violation of rights. Education can help alleviate these problems. Education creates awareness and helps in eradicating violence against women. We should conduct empirical research to better understand the incidence of violence, costs associated with it and factors that lead to it. We are also building evidence on interventions designed to prevent violence against women, particularly comprehensive approaches that include economically empowering women, involving boys and men, protecting survivors of violence and rehabilitating men who are abusive.

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