Elimination of Gender Based Violence in Society and Role of Education

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ABSTRACT

Gender based violence is one of the major gender issues in society. Gender-Based Violence is violence involving men and women, in which the woman is usually the victim; and which is derived from gender norms and roles as well as from unequal power relations between women and men. Besides this, patriarchy, culture, traditions, old conventional beliefs, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, financial crisis etc. acts as a driving force behind this issue. Many research findings and project reports have shown the increasing prevalence of violence in the society. According to National Family Health Survey (2019-21), 29.3% married women and 3.1% pregnant women are experiencing domestic or sexual violence. 86% married women who are victims of marital violence do not seek help. Many efforts are going on to eliminate the violence against women as it adversely affects the physical and mental health of the victims. Education plays a vital role in shaping the mind of an individual and can reform the society because the report also showed that women's experience of violence declines with women's schooling. By education, we can create awareness and empower girls or women, ensure equal opportunities, reduce gender inequality and so on as it increases her employment opportunities and socio-economic status.

Keywords: elimination of violence, gender-based violence, role of education, society, women

Introduction

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. It can be defined as a description of roles, activities and responsibilities assigned to men and women in a given society, culture, community or time. Men and women are expected to perform the fixed roles assigned to them by the society. These roles have been reinforced through social institutions such as family, education, and religion, which have perpetuated the idea that men are superior to women. Patriarchy has played a significant role in shaping traditional gender roles.

Society and patriarchy

Patriarchy can be conceptualized as a system or systems producing and reproducing gendered and intersectional inequalities, and men's power and women's subordination. It is a system of social, political, and economic structures and practices, in which men as a group/category govern, oppress, and exploit women as a group/category. Patriarchy is simultaneously structural and ideological, a hierarchical organization of social institutions and social relations (Dobash & Dobash,1979). De Keseredy (2020) conceptualizes patriarchy as being made up of two elements: "Structurally, the patriarchy is a hierarchical organization of social institutions and social relationships that allows men to maintain positions of power, privilege, and leadership in society. As an ideology, the patriarchy rationalizes itself. This means that it provides ways of creating acceptance of subordination not only by those who benefit from such actions but also by those who are placed in such subordinate positions by society". According to

Walby (1990), patriarchy is composed of six factors which are sources of exploitation and are interdependent in nature. They are the household, paid employment, the state, male-on-female violence, sexuality, and cultural institutions. The Middle East and North Africa is the most patriarchal region in the world. India, Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan, Nepal and Peru are few places where men still control and rule over women. Besides patriarchy there is an existence of matriarchal society where females hold the power and control. For instance, Mosuo in China, Minangkabau in Indonesia, Bribri in Costa Rica, Akan tribe of Ghana in South Africa, The Umoja of Samburu in North Kenya, Nagovisi in New Guinea and Garo & Khasi tribe of Meghalaya in India. Hence, the social structure is not balanced which plays a major role in gender inequality.

Gender inequality and discrimination

Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. It persists in every corner of the world. To tackle this global issue and achieve gender equality many efforts are going on; for instance, 5th Goal of 17 Sustainable Development Goal (Agenda 2030) is to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". It has 9 targets with indicators. Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. Gender based Violence is a barrier in achieving gender equality.

Gender based violence

Gender-based violence refers to any type of harm that is perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their factual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Gender-Based Violence is violence involving men and women, in which the woman is usually the victim; and which is derived from gender norms and roles as well as from unequal power relations between women and men. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) defines violence against women 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."

Forms of Violence against women:

1. Physical Violence: Kicking, punching, choking, burning, stabbing, pouring boiled water, setting on fire, homicide, gunshot etc.

2. Psychological violence / mental harm: - Repeated verbal abuse, Spitting on, Confinement and deprivation of physical, financial and personal resources, Constant humiliation etc.

3. Sexual Violence: - Coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force, rape (Forced unwelcome sex), Abduction etc.

In India, domestic violence is ubiquitous. Domestic violence is any pattern of abusive behavior that negatively impacts a person in an intimate partner relationship. It also includes any actions that humiliate, intimidate, coerce, threaten, blame, or harm a person.

According to statistics, in 2022, the National Commission for Women received 30,900 reports of various crimes against women 6,900 of which involved domestic violence against women. In comparison to 2021, there were more rape, dowry harassment, and domestic violence complaints in 2022.

Types of domestic violence

- Physical Abuse: Slapping, hitting, pulling hair
- Sexual Abuse: Marital rape, sexual contact, forced sex
- Emotional Abuse: Harming a women's sense of self-worth or damaging one's relationship with her children
- Economic Abuse: Controlling or unfairly using women's economic resources, including money, assets, and credit,
- Psychological Abuse: Causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm

- Technological Abuse: Harass, exploit, extort or monitor women by using any form of technology, including but not limited to internet-enabled devices, online spaces, or any means of high-end technologies.

Causes of violence

There are certain causes of violence –

- Illiteracy, Poverty, Unemployment/Financial issues.
- Conflicts with their intimate partner: Anger issues, any kind of mistrust or on any reasons.

Extra-marital affairs

- Men's superiority complex
- Religious sanctifications show a subdued sort of dominance over women
- Desire for a male kid
- Humiliation brought on by challenges at work
- Dowry system
- Culture and social system (Dominant society)
- Structural barriers
- Old Conventional beliefs
  Dictated gender roles (role of women: Child bearing & child rearing)
- Patriarchy

Status of Gender based violence

Sustainable Development Goal- 5

- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".
- Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

SDG: Progress Report 2022

Violence against women and girls is prevalent across countries and affect women of all ages.

In 2018, globally one in four women (26%) or 641 million women are experiencing physical and sexual violence by husband or intimate partners (at least once in the lifetime)

SDG: Progress report 2023

The world is not on the track to achieve gender equality by 2030.

National Family Health Survey:

2019-2021 (NFHS-5)

- 29.3% married women (18-49 Years) are experiencing domestic or sexual violence.
- 3.1% pregnant women (18-49 Years) are experiencing physical violence.
- 86% married women who are victims of marital violence do not seek help.

Due to social pressure and ignorance by society and for other reasons most of the time, victims try to cover all kinds of violence they are experiencing. It is so visible that it seems normal rather than a problem. That's why they have started adapting themselves to their environment.

Prevalence of Physical Violence –

There is only a slight difference between domestic violence in rural and urban areas.

Rural – 31.6%

Urban – 24.2%

Women who are employed are more likely to experience physical violence than women who are not employed. For example, 36% of women who are employed for cash, compared with 25% of women who are not employed, have experienced physical violence since age 15 years.

The report also showed that Women's experience of violence declines with women's schooling and wealth.

- By Schooling - 39% (women are reported against violence)
- No Schooling - 17%
- Highest wealth quintile -17%
- Lowest wealth quintile - 38%

Spouse Violence in State:

- Highest - Karnataka (48%)
- Second Highest - Bihar (43%)
- Lowest - Lakshadweep (1.3%)

In 2021

- Domestic Violence Act 2005: 507 Cases registered.

● Indian Penal Code Section 498A: 136000 cases were registered.

National Commission for Women

● 2019-20: 20309 cases were registered

● 2020-21: 26513 cases were registered

The health consequences of Gender based Violence Against women

Physical Health: Physical Injury (Loss of vision, hearing, and disfiguring), Unwanted pregnancy, STIs and HIV/AIDs, Abortion, APH (Ante partum hemorrhage), Chronic PID (pelvic inflammatory diseases), Irritable bowel/syndrome, Self-injurious behavior (smoking, unprotected sex…etc.)

● Mental Health: Depression, Fear, Low self-esteem, Sexual dysfunction, Poor appetite, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)

● Fatal outcomes: Suicide, Homicide, Death

Role of education in the elimination of violence against women in society:

Education is the best tool to eliminate the violence in society. When women learn to read, they will not only be able to read the laws and rights that protect them but also make other women aware about human rights and the benefits of education. Findings of the research showed that the schooling of children impacts good on their life, increases confidence, able to protect themselves from sexual and physical abuse (Prezenszky, Galli et al.2018). Education plays a central role in empowering women and making them capable of getting rid of any kind of violence by raising her voice, creating awareness and sensitizing through different workshops, programs/activities or by other means, opening the door for equal opportunities to participate in different economic activities to make herself self-independent, discussing or sharing positive success stories of victims or survivors to motivate others, reduction of negative impacts in the society like stereotypes, discriminatory behaviour and inequalities, by developing positive attitude towards women's role in the society as attitude has significant consequences with regard to the perpetration of violence against women. One of the studies also indicates that the occurrence of violence appeared negatively related with level of education of the women (Khan et.al. 2013). National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) report showed that Women's experience of violence declines with women's schooling. Haq (2000) supported education of women by asserting that educated women having employment and paid for their services out of home, play a deciding role. Therefore, education of women is quite necessary to eliminate violence against them in the society and guarantee their basic human rights.

NGOs working for Violence Against Women-

● Snehalaya (1989)

● Majlis Manch (1991)

● The Baale Mane (2001)

● Aarti for Girls (1992)

● My Choices Foundation (2012)

● The Bajnya Trust (2008)

● PCVC- International Foundation for crime prevention and victim care (2001)

● Vipla Foundation

● Sakhya Women Guidance Cell

● MAVA: Men against violence and abuse

● Sayodhya Home for Women in need (2010)

● Swayam (1997); Helpline no is also available

Conclusion:

Prevalence of violence is a barrier to social as well as national development because is leads to harmful impact on the victim; physical and psychological/mental health. All kind of gender-based violence can be eliminated by education and society. Education is the mean by which we can reform the society and make women aware and empower them as well. It is the society who define the gender roles. The social structure is not balanced. Contrary to the patriarchal belief, there are still some regions where the social system is ruled by women i.e. Matriarchy. To achieve gender equality, it is the need of the hour to make gender balanced society. By providing equal access and opportunities to get education, it can be realized that the men and women both have potential to excel in their desirable field. No one is superior to each other. There is an urgent need to shape the mind of society by cognitive restructuring. It can also be eliminated by proper implementation of rules, regulations, laws and acts.

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