



## **A Study among youth to find out ways to prevent violence against girls and women in society**

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### **ORIGINAL ARTICLE**



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### **Abstract :-**

Majority of the respondents suggested Alcoholism/Substance abuse as the prime cause of violence against women, especially in family set up that is domestic violence and crime against women in society. Lack of stringent laws and their poor implementation was also reported as a major contributing reason.

Crime/increase in crime in the society was seen as the prime consequence of violence against women & girls in society. Development of a sense of inferiority for Women/Girls in boys/men and increased violent habits among men/boys and was also seen as a major consequence of VAW.

Strict laws/Stringent punishment and strict implementation was recommended as the prime strategy to end VAW in society. Apart from this training of boys from school level and Sensitization/Training for Gender equality at all levels coupled with increase in girls' education were also seen as the possible effective strategies to end VAW in society.

### **Key words :-**

Violence Against Women, Domestic Violence, Gender Based Violence.

### **Introduction :-**

Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions. At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime with the abuser usually someone known to her.

Violence against women denies women their most basic rights and freedoms, including freedom of opinion, equality and justice before the law, to marry (or not) according to their own free will, to mobility, participation, to vote, to have access information and education, to work, to be employed.

The main barrier to preventing violence against women and girls is the belief that it is justified and some traditional customs reinforce these patriarchal attitudes. For example, the payment of bride price is commonly believed to give men the right to control their wives, including with violence if necessary. Another obstacle to preventing violence against women is the perception that challenging the problem is for women only. Also, violence is often seen as a private, family matter in which outsiders should not intervene. A third barrier is the view that violence against women is an isolated and relatively unimportant issue that has little to do with community and national development.

Working with men and boys to change their attitudes and behaviour is an important part of violence prevention. This means encouraging men and boys to examine their assumptions about gender roles and masculinity through sensitisation, training and long term behavioural change programs.

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women states, “violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women” and “violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.”

These facts warrant an investigation to find out ways to prevent violence against girls and women in society.

**Aim :** “To assess among youth the effective ways to prevent violence against girls and women in society.”

### **Objectives :-**

1. To identify the main causes for VAW.
2. To assess the effects or consequences of VAW.
3. To find out effective strategies to prevent VAW.
4. To draw the recommendation based on findings of the study.

### **Literature Review :-**

Violence against women is a grave violation of the fundamental human rights of women and girls and remains one of the most common crimes committed against them. Existing data on violence against women from sources such as UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women and WHO acknowledges that violence against women continues to be a global pandemic and therefore a matter of critical concern. (1) Violence can occur in different private and public spaces, including on the internet and through other evolving technologies. It is rooted in historical inequalities between women and men, and can cause significant physical, social, psychological and economic harm to women. (2)

Population-based surveys using a standardized methodology (developed for the WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women) have produced comparable information on the prevalence, causes, contributing factors and consequences of violence against women. According to these studies, 13% to 68% of women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in

their lives (3-8). These surveys and studies estimate a lifetime prevalence of such violence between 9% and 68% in south Asian region. In developing countries, women are twice as likely as men to experience violence, 27.9% of women have experienced such violence at some point in their lives. Evidence shows that a woman is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped, or killed by a current or former intimate partner than by any other person. Variation in the prevalence of violence against women across countries and communities shows that such violence is preventable.

### Methodology :-

This will be a limited interview-based study. A study tool will be designed and administered to a mixed group of youngsters about 25 in number. Respondents will include college students, working women and young men. Informed consent of the concerned will be taken after explaining the nature and utilization of study.

- **Study Design :-** Interview based cross sectional study
- **Study Setting :-** A mixed group of youngsters about 25 in number will be interviewed on convenience basis.
- **Study Duration :-** Fifteen days.
- **Sample Size :-** A mixed group of 25 youngsters.
- **Sampling Technique :-** Convenience Sampling.
- **Data Collection Procedure :-** Interview will be done with a Questionnaire developed for this purpose.
- **Data Analysis Procedure :-** Data collected will be analyzed and data frequencies and percentage will be calculated. Findings will be summarized in tables. Respondents' views would be analysed under three heads: Causes, Effect & strategies.
- **Expected Results :-** This study will provide us insight to Gender based violence, its causes & effects and the ways to counter it.
- **Ethical issues :-** Informed Consent will be taken from parents of the children as well as individual mothers.

### Analysis and discussion :-

Overall 20 participants were interviewed; it was a mixed group of young men & women from different locations/settings. 06 males and 14 females aged between 18 to 34 years were asked to participate in the study. Men were aged between 24 and 32 years, while ladies were in the age bracket of 18 to 34 years.

**Table – 01 – Sex of participants**

Males	Females	Total
06	14	20

Both men and women were asked to participate in the study to understand and remove gender biases, also to get more complete assessment of the social problem.

**Table – 02 – Age of the participants in years**

Sex	Below 20	20-25	25-30	30 +	Total
Males	00	02	02	02	06
Females	02	09	02	01	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>20</b>

Youngsters aged between 20 to 30 years were preferred but few outside the bracket on both the sides were also interviewed as per situation and convenience.

**Table – 03 – Education of the participants**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Graduate and above</b>	<b>Total</b>
Males	00	03	03	06
Females	05	04	05	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>20</b>

Educated youth were questioned, for this minimum matriculation was taken as standard, plus two, graduate and above were also interviewed for better understanding and mature responses.

**Table – 04 – Occupation of the participants**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Working</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
Males	01	04	01	00	06
Females	04	09	00	01	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>20</b>

Participants were interviewed in different settings viz university campus, government offices, private organizations, beauty parlour etc. Educational institutions were visited to include students both boys and girls. Similarly work places were visited to question working men and women. Beauty parlour setting was chosen to cover young women who are in women specific work and both working and non working women attend parlours.

Respondents' views were analysed under three heads: Causes, Effect & strategies.

The main causes of violence against women & girls in society were listed as -

1. Social Structure
2. Family
3. Traditions
4. Alcoholism/Substance abuse
5. Modernization
6. Media
7. Early marriage/late marriage
8. Patriarchal setup
9. Laws & lack of their implementation
- 10 Other

Respondents were asked to choose more than one options, if they thought so and were advised to number them in that case.

- 50% (10) respondents suggested Alcoholism/Substance abuse as the prime cause of violence against women, especially in family set up that is domestic violence and crime against women in society.

- Modernization, Patriarchal set up and lack of implementations of laws were considered as other chief reasons for VAW in society.
- 60% (12) respondents suggested lack of stringent laws and their poor implementation as a major contributing reason for VAW.
- More than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the respondents (07) in each case suggested that family set up, social structure, patriarchy and early/late marriage are also potential reasons for violence against women in society.
- Media (02) 10% & cultural traditions (03) 15% were also seen as reasons for VAW
- Among notable Other reasons listed were gendered social atmosphere, where women are considered second grade or inferior to men and dependency of women folk on their male family members in day to day life.

The chief consequences of violence against women & girls in society were listed as :-

1. Crime/increase in crime
2. Family disintegration
3. Break up in marriage
4. Rape/Molestation/Eve teasing
5. Increase in violent habits among Men/Boys
6. Development of a sense of inferiority for Women/Girls
7. Other

Respondents were asked to choose more than one options, if they thought so and were advised to number them in that case.

- Crime/increase in crime in the society was seen as the prime consequence of violence against women & girls in society, 75% (15) of the respondents thought it to be the number one effect.
- Increase in violent habits among Men/Boys was also adjudged as a major consequence of VAW 60% (12) respondents suggested this to be an effect, Development of a sense of inferiority for Women/Girls in boys/men was closely followed, as 55% (11) responses suggested it as a major consequence of VAW.
- Family disintegration accounted for about 45% (09) responses where as break up in marriage was also considered as an effect of VAW, although only 20% (04) responses were in its favour.
- Rape/Molestation/Eve teasing was also thought to be an eminent but natural cause of VAW in society, 40% (08) responses suggested this.
- Among the notable other effects of VAW as suggested by the respondents were development of fear/insecurity and a sense of inferiority among women, also increase in levels of toleration in women were seen as consequences of VAW.
- Strengthening existing gender biases and loss of moral values in society were also seen as consequences.

The effective strategies/ways to prevent such violence

1. Prohibition/Ban on substance abuse
2. Training of boys from school level
3. Sensitization/Training for Gender equality at all levels
4. Marriage at right age
5. Belief in Institution of Marriage
6. Strict laws/Stringent punishment
7. Strict implementation of laws
8. Right use of media
9. Code of conduct for public places/community spaces/workplaces etc
- 10 Increase in girl education
- 11 Increase in women employment
- 12 Women Empowerment
- 13 Population control
- 14 Moral Education
- 15 Other

Respondents were asked to choose more than one options, if they thought so and were advised to number them in that case.

- Strict laws/Stringent punishment was recommended as the prime strategy to end VAW in society 65% (13) respondents thought this could be the remedy.
- Training of boys from school level and Sensitization/Training for Gender equality at all levels were also seen as the possible effective strategies to end VAW in society, 55% (11) respondents advocated for both these ways.
- Strict implementation of laws was also seen as possible effective solution to prevent VAW in society, 45% (09) respondents thought it could lead a way.
- Equal number of responses (09) 45% sought for Moral Education as an effective strategy to prevent such violence.
- Prohibition/Ban on substance abuse was also seen as a major strategy 40% (08) respondents advocated for this strategy to prevent VAW.
- Marriage at right age was also seen as a possible way to prevent VAW, 40% (08) respondents viewed this as a remedy.
- Women Empowerment was also suggested as an effective strategy, however it was used in abstract term and strategy 40% (08) respondents advocated for this measure/strategy.
- Increase in girl education was seen as a major strategy to end VAW in society, 30% (06) respondents advocated that women literacy is the key to end such violence in the society.
- Right use of media was also seen as an effective strategy, 30% (06) respondents advocated that media could play an important role in ending or preventing such violence in the society.

- Code of conduct for public places/community spaces/workplaces etc was also seen as an effective way to prevent VAW, 25% (05) respondents advocated that it could be the key to end such violence in the society.
- One fourth of the respondents suggested that Population control is also a possible way to prevent such violence in society.
- Increase in women employment was seen as a major strategy to end VAW in society, 20% (04) respondents advocated that women employment will lead to their empowerment and subsequently to end such violence in the society.
- Belief in Institution of Marriage was also seen as a possible way, 20% (04) respondents viewed this as a remedy.
- Among notable other strategies were eliminating existing gender biases in family and society, creating an equality based environment in family/society, effective parenting and behavioural and attitudinal change in individuals especially men folk.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations :-**

### **Conclusions :-**

1. The study shows that violence against women and girls is a complex phenomenon and its causes, effects/consequences are closely related to the effective strategies to prevent such violence.
2. Regarding Causes for VAW no singular reason could be attributed for this but multiple reasons that work in tandem are responsible for such violence.
3. Alcoholism/Substance abuse is seen as the prime cause for VAW, but it is not the reason, it contributes to existing patriarchal structure of society, where gender biases and GBV is accepted as natural and normative.
4. Crime/increase in crime in the society, Increase in violent habits among Men/Boys and Development of a sense of inferiority for Women/Girls in boys/men are the prime consequence of violence against women & girls in society, still they are not the actual consequences.
5. Strengthening existing gender biases and loss of moral values in society are the actual consequences of such violence.
6. Strict laws/Stringent punishment, strict implementation of laws, Training of boys from school level and Sensitization/Training for Gender equality at all levels and moral education are possible strategies to end VAW in society.
7. Prohibition/Ban on substance abuse may be a major strategy to prevent VAW.
8. Increase in girl education/ women literacy, Code conduct for public places/ community spaces/workplaces etc and women empowerment are also possible remedies to prevent or end such violence in the society.
9. Eliminating existing gender biases in family and society, creating an equality based environment in family/society, effective parenting and behavioural and attitudinal change in individuals especially men folk could be the real change maker against VAW.

### Recommendations :-

1. It is recommended that, Training of boys from school level and Sensitization/ Training for Gender equality at all levels should be undertaken.
2. It is recommended that, the concerned authorities shall make appropriate efforts for strict implementation of laws related to crime against women.
3. There needs to be more government schemes/programmes to increase girl education/ Women literacy.
4. There is a need for Prohibition/Ban on substance abuse to arrest the trend towards increase in VAW.
5. It is recommended that, the concerned authorities shall make appropriate efforts for formulation and strict implementation of code of conduct for public places/community spaces/workplaces etc
6. There is a need for Moral/Value Education for awareness towards GBV and its effects on society.
7. Coordinated efforts are needed for spreading awareness among the adolescents/ students/youth especially men folk eliminating existing gender biases in family and society, creating an equality based environment in family/society, effective parenting and behavioural and attitudinal change in individuals, by educational institutes, media, authorities, NGOs and community.

### ACRONYMS :-

VAW	Violence Against Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
GBV	Gender Based Violence
DV	Domestic Violence
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

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8. United Nations, CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 19: Violence against Women, para. 6, 1992, A/47/38. The Toolkit uses the terms “gender-based violence” and “violence against women” interchangeably.

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