



Prevalence of Criminal and Violent Acts against Women

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Abstract

The meaning of criminal and violent acts against women is direct or indirect physical or mental unkindness to women. Various types of violence against women are eve-teasing, sexual harassment, rape, trafficking, female foeticide and infanticide, molestation, bigamy, fraudulent marriage, adultery, enticement of married women, abduction and kidnapping, harassment of women at the work place, wife beating, dowry death, female child abuse, abuse of elderly female and so forth. Almost every woman has experienced the feeling of being mistreated, trivialized, kept out, degraded, disrespected, ignored, assaulted, laughed at or discriminated against because of her gender. The main purpose of this research paper is to understand the prevalence of criminal and violent acts against women. These acts are considered as major impediments towards not only progress of the individuals and the community but also the country. It is vital for all individuals to be aware of prevention strategies to curb criminal and violent acts against women.

Keywords: Violence; Criminal Acts; Women; Crime Rate; Prevention Strategies

Introduction

Violence in general is a coercive mechanism that to assert force or pressure upon the other. The main purpose of inflicting violence is to feel the sense of control and power. It is usually perpetrated by those who possess the power over those individuals who are vulnerable, or by the helpless in retaliation which attempts to deny their powerlessness. The problem of defining violence is complicated. It is usually defined as the physical violence, threats, physical and mental harassment. There are forms of criminal and violent acts that are directed specifically against women, these are rape, sexual harassment, acid attacks, sexual exploitation as in prostitution, sexual debasement as in pornography, domestic violence ranging from battery to torture and even murder. All these emerge from the structure of patriarchy. The system of male dominance legitimated within the family and society through rights, privileges, power and authority [1].

The extent and the forms of expression of patriarchy vary from society to society. Women are subordinates to men as their position is degraded. The second process takes place through an influential system of firmly allocated roles to women. These prove to be the boundaries for all their actions. The most potent and restrictive injunction is the virtual debarment of women in the public places and the places typically designated as the male sphere. There have been imposition of many strict rules and norms upon women, such

as, they cannot participate in the decision making processes, do not have any say and so forth. The prevalence of crime and violence against women illustrate the conjunction of these processes and, also bring out the cultural specificity of some types of violence [1].

Types of Crime against Women

There are different types of criminal and violent acts against women and these have been stated as follows: [2].

- **Rape:** Rape is a type of sexual assault involving sexual intercourse, which is inflicted upon a person by one or more persons, without the consent of that person. The act may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority or against a person who is unable of valid consent, such as, one who is unconscious, incapacitated, or below the legal age of consent. Rape is a crime not only against a woman, but it is against the entire society. It damages the psychology of a woman and drives her into deep emotional crisis. Rape is therefore the most despicable crime. It is a crime against basic human rights and violates the victim's most valued right, namely, the right to life which includes right to live with human dignity contained in Article 21.
- **Trafficking of Women and Girls:** Trafficking is defined as the trade in something that should not be traded in for various social, economic and political reasons. The concept

of human trafficking refers to the criminal practice of exploiting human beings by treating them as commodities for profit. Even after being trafficked, victims are subjected to long term exploitation. Trafficking for both commercial and non-sex based exploitation is a transnational and a multifaceted challenge. It is an organized criminal activity, an extreme form of human rights violations and an issue of economic empowerment and social justice. The trafficking of women and children causes indefinable distresses as it violates the rights and dignity of the individuals in numerous ways. It interrupts the individual's rights to life, respect, self-esteem, safety, privacy, health, education, career and redressal of grievances.

- **Dowry:** Official statistics show a stable increase in dowry crimes. More than 95,000 women are killed every year in India over dowry. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh still record the maximum number of dowry crimes, four women reportedly die every day because of dowry harassment and domestic violence. The cases of dowry crimes are the highest accounting for 32.4% of crimes against women within the country. There have been protests against dowry crimes by the women organizations, serious activism, legal amendments and media. There has been an increased awareness of dowry being a crime. The practice continues on a massive scale. Despite every disgrace, dowry continues to be the signature of marriage. Women need real social, political, financial and moral support in their combat against the system. They have to be authorized so that they can take their decisions about their own life by refusing the dowry system. On a daily basis, at least 50 cases of dowry related violence are reported in India.
- **Female Infanticide and Foeticide:** India's sex ratio, amongst children aged 0-6 years, is disturbing. The ratio has declined from 976 females for every 1000 males in 1961 to 914 in 2011. Every national census has documented a decline in the ratio, signalling a universal trend. Preliminary data from the 2011 census have recorded many districts with sex ratios of less than 850. The ratio in urban areas is significantly lower than those in rural areas of the country. The preference for the male children has led to the practices of female foeticide and female infanticide. Female foeticide is killing of the girl child inside the mother's womb and female infanticide is killing of the girl children when they are born. These are considered to be the most heinous crimes as they deny the girls, the basic right, the right to live.
- **Child Marriage:** When the marriage of the individuals take place at the age of less than 18 years, then it is termed as child marriage. Child marriage imposes detrimental effects upon especially the girl children. The girls in rural areas, belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society as considered as liabilities. They are usually discouraged from the acquisition of education, trained regarding the performance of household tasks, obeying the elders and are married off at an early age. Child marriage deprives the girls of their childhood and acquiring education. They get primarily involved in the performance of the household tasks. India's Parliament adopted the Child Marriage Restraint Act in 1978, a revision of the British Child Marriage Prevention Act of 1929 and the following amendment of 1949, setting 18 as the minimum age of women for marriage and 21 for men. Nevertheless, like in many other Indian social spheres, the law seems insignificant when it comes to protecting the rights of the underprivileged and most vulnerable individuals within the society.
- **Domestic Violence:** There has been prevalence of domestic violence amongst all households. Amongst the deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society, it is more as compared to well-educated and wealthy individuals. Women are primarily victims of domestic violence, as they experience various forms of abuse, verbal, and physical. Verbal abuse is making use of harsh language, inappropriate words and speaking in a manner that is not acceptable. On the other hand, physical abuse is beating, pushing, shaking or causing hurt and injury to the person using some object. The occurrence of domestic violence can be in a major form or minor form, but women are the ones who experience it to a major extent. The individuals who are involved in imposing violent acts upon women include mainly their husbands, fathers, brothers or other family members.
- **Psychological and Emotional Abuse:** The psychological and emotional abuse is inflicting any kind of fear or terror upon a girl or a woman. This type of abuse usually takes place out of the feelings of animosity and hatred against someone. When girls or women experience any types of situations or circumstances that make them feel vulnerable, anxious or apprehensive, then they are experiencing psychological and emotional abuse. Discriminatory treatment against the girls and women within the households or workplaces or any public places, giving more recognition to the boys and men are some of the factors that cause psychological and emotional abuse. There have been cases, when women are neglected, they are not given any respect and recognition, and they are communicated about certain areas that may enable them to experience psychological and emotional abuse. When a person is in a state of deprivation, he usually experiences psychological and emotional abuse.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is referred to the intimidation, bullying or coercion of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is usually common at the work place, it is also an inappropriate promise of rewards and promotion in return

for favours. It is considered as illegal and inappropriate. It includes a range of behaviour from apparently minor misdemeanours and displeasures to actual sexual abuse or sexual assault. Sexual harassment is a form of prohibited employment discrimination in many countries, and is a form of abuse, sexual and psychological and bullying. For many companies, preventing sexual harassment, and protecting employees from sexual harassment charges, have become the main objectives of legal decision-making. As it has been stated that women usually become victims of sexual harassment at the workplace, therefore, employers and other male members of the organization should treat women with respect and courtesy and reward them on the basis of their skills, abilities and performance.

- **Pornography:** Pornography or porn is the depiction of unambiguous sexual subject matter for the purposes of sexual interest and stimulating satisfaction. Pornography may use any of the variety of media, ranging from books, magazines, postcards, photos, sculpture, drawing, painting, animation, sound recording, film, video, or video game. Nevertheless, when sexual acts are carried out for a live audience, by definition it is not pornography, as the term applies to the depiction of the act, rather than the act itself. Pornography has often been subject to censorship and legal limitations on publication on grounds of offensiveness. Such grounds and the definition of what is or is not pornography have varied in different historical, cultural, and national frameworks. The genres of pornography are based on the type of activity included and the category of the participants.
- **Acid Attacks:** Women and girls have in the present and past been victims of acid attacks. Acid attack means throwing of acid upon any of the body parts of a person with the purpose to mutilate, deface, torture or kill. Mainly acid attack is done on the face of a person. There have been number of women and girls within the country who have become victims of acid attacks. Women usually become acid attack victims, at the hands of obsessed males who are willing to marry them. Refusals on the part of women, the reason being, they expressed willingness to pursue their career and they have not yet attained the right age for marriage made them to undergo excruciating pain and suffering. Some of the women have even lost their eyesight. Acid attacks impose long term detrimental effects upon women and their families. They experience severe psychological and physical pain and suffering and have to undergo them in the long run.

Causes of Crime against women

There are numerous types of criminal and violent acts against women. There are certain causes behind the prevalence of such acts and these have been stated as follows: [2].

- **Abuse of Power and Authority:** When the individuals at the workplace or educational institutions are involved in the imposition of any types of criminal and violent acts against women, they are abusing their power and authority. Every organization and educational institutions have certain rules and regulations, which the individuals need to follow. When they commit any criminal and violent acts, they are not only abusing power and authority, but violating the rules, norms, policies, principles, ethics and standards of the organizations and educational institutions. Criminal and violent acts are used as political weapons and then turn into instruments for the intimidation of segments of the individuals, where women are primarily the victims of criminal and violent acts.
- **Conditions of Poverty and Scarcity:** Conditions of poverty, lack of human and social capital, gender discrimination, social exclusion, inappropriate governance, deprivation, marginalization and vulnerability may cause trafficking. When individuals are unable to meet the needs and requirements of their family members, then trafficking of girls take place for profit. There are other factors, such as, globalization, employment trade, migration policies, conflicts and environmental disasters, these can lead to situations that may cause an increase in vulnerabilities. Global financial crisis has led to an increase in the human trafficking not only in India, but in other countries of the world as well. The increase in the supply of workers lead to increased risks for economic opportunities, which may make women victims of crime and violence such as, prostitution.
- **Status of Women:** Women constitute the poorest of the poor within the community. These are as a result of gender insensitivity, discrimination, lack of social status and basic rights, together with demanding domestic responsibilities, which decline their access to resources, education, training and labour markets. Within families, women and mainly girl children, generally have less access to educational opportunities, food and health care as well as to employment opportunities. Anti-female biases are reflected in the fact that South Asia is one of the few regions in the world where men outnumber women. Men are treated as superior to women, they have the right to make decisions and have a say in important matters. These factors enable the women to feel neglected and they become victims of criminal and violent acts.
- **Prevalence of Dowry:** There are several reasons for the prevalence of the dowry system. It is regarded as the necessary precondition for marriage. Families still have this viewpoint that marriage will lead to accumulation of wealth. There are number of items that people desire to have in their houses, the marriage of their son is considered as the way of acquiring those items, which they themselves cannot afford. The fami-

lies of the girls believes that giving dowry would enable them to acquire a higher social status and better matches for other children. The demand of the individuals to obtain extravagant and luxurious items enables them to harass the girls and their families for dowry.

- **Family Bonding:** Child marriage may have many purposes. In some societies, it is used as a method to secure political ties between the families. For example, the child belonging to a wealthy or royal family of a weaker power would sometimes be arranged to marry into the royal family of a resilient neighbouring power, thus averting itself from being integrated. In the lower classes, if they were well-off, families could use child marriages as the means to acquire financial ties with more affluent people, ensuring their successions. When two families need to collaborate with each other regarding some concern or issue, then they may make use of child marriages. Hence, it is a way of creating family bonding.
- **Anger and Frustration:** The prevalence of the feelings of anger and frustration within the mind-sets of the individuals are regarded as the primary causes of inflicting harm upon women. For instance, throwing of acid upon girls and women take place out of the feelings of animosity, hatred and anger. Abuse and mistreatment of women within the households usually take place out of the feelings of anger and frustration. When individuals possess a short tempered nature, when their work does not get done in an adequate manner, when they do not keep good health, are unemployed, or face financial and other problems, they usually inflict anger and frustration upon girls and women within the house.
- **Illiteracy and Unawareness:** It is believed that education and generation of awareness within the mind-sets of the individuals enables them to inculcate the traits of morality, decency, ethics and demureness. When individuals are not literate and unaware of policies, norms and ethics, they inflict violent and criminal acts upon women. When individuals get involved into heinous crimes such as, rape, sexual harassment, acid attacks or murder, they usually do not take into consideration the consequences and severe penalties would be imposed upon them. Their ignorance and lack of knowledge compels them to get involved into such acts. Primary reasons are prevalence of the feelings of enmity and antagonism.
- **Cultural Factors:** The differences between men and women in some of the communities are regarded as cultural. Families belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society regard men as the assets that will generate wealth and reputation for the family. They believe in getting their sons educated and even send them to urban areas to acquire higher education and better job opportunities. On the other hand, girls are considered as liabilities and they are meant to perform only the household chores.

Therefore, these differences prove to be the factors in imposing violent and criminal acts upon women. Men in some cases possess this viewpoint that violence can be used as a means for resolving conflicts.

- **Economic Factors:** Women are usually dependent economically on men, particularly those who are home-makers. When women have not been engaged in employment opportunities, they usually have access to limited financial resources. There are discriminatory laws regarding inheritance, property rights, use of communal lands, and maintenance after divorce or widowhood. Limited access to employment opportunities in the formal and informal sectors and education and training opportunities for women in some societies are economic factors that degrades the position of women within the society. In most cases, asking for money may lead to occurrence of conflicts and disputes within the households. The occurrence of financial problems within the households are the primary causes of domestic violence.
- **Political Factors:** There is under-representation of women in power, politics, media and in the legal and medical professions. There have been instances, when women are not permitted to have a say in the making of decisions or any other matters. When they are abused or mistreated, they are not able to redress their grievances. Women belonging to minority groups feel vulnerable in communicating to other individuals about their problems. In some cases, they possess the viewpoint that their husbands have the right to exercise power and authority over them, hence, they bear all types of violent and criminal acts. There have been limited organization of women as a political force and they have limited participation in the organized political system. These are the political factors which cause prevalence of criminal and violent acts upon women.

Effects of crime against women

Every kind of criminal and violent act has an unfavourable, distressing, stressful and an upsetting effect upon women. There are differences in the extent of pain and suffering that women experience, depending upon the type of criminal and violent act. For instance, a woman who has been verbally abused by her husband may be upset for a short period of time. On the other hand, a woman who has become a victim of acid attack may undergo excruciating pain and suffering for a long term period. Criminal and violent acts impose negative effects upon women and these have been stated as follows:

- **Dropping Out of Schools:** The prevalence of violence in schools and educational institutions compel females to discontinue their education and drop out, even before they have enhanced their skills and abilities. There have been numerous instances, which make the girls feel vulnerable in attend-

ing educational institutions, because they experience various forms of criminal and violent acts such as, stalking, harassment, verbal abuse, physical abuse and so forth. Due to occurrence of these acts, they do not feel comfortable in commuting to educational institutions. School drop-out is usually prevalent amongst women and girls belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society.

- **Leaving Jobs:** Experiencing sexual harassment or any type of violent and criminal acts at the workplace compel women to leave their jobs. Well paid and reputed jobs are hard to find for women, especially belonging to marginalized communities and when they have not acquired high level education. There are women, who have been fortunate enough to find jobs to sustain their living. There are girls who migrate from rural to urban areas to work as domestic helpers. On the other hand, when their employers, or colleagues may impose any type of criminal and violent acts upon them, they get compelled to leave their jobs and as a result of which give up their source of income.
- **Mental Disorders:** When women are exposed to prolonged or acute stress, the areas of the brain, such as the hippocampus, amygdala and prefrontal cortex undergo structural changes that have implications for mental health and cognitive functioning, and can lead to mental disorders, somatoform disorders or chronic illness, as well as other physical conditions. When a woman has to respond to severe stress, then the immune system can be compromised and there can be occurrence of other diseases and illnesses. There is an interrelationship between stress levels and cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, chronic pain and gastrointestinal disorders [3].
- **Introversion and Isolation:** Men have been regarded as superior to women in India since ancient times. Towards the end of British rule, women increasingly found their marginalization and inequality to be unacceptable [4]. When women are not given recognition within the society, when they are not heard, when they do not find anyone to redress their grievances to, they possess an introvert nature and become isolated. The women and girls, who are mistreated and harmed within the households and the societies, will find it difficult to possess an amiable and a sociable nature. They would always feel vulnerable in interacting with people and stay in a secluded place. Isolation and introversion are regarded as impediments within the course of progression of the individuals.
- **Vulnerability to Diseases and Health Problems:** Women, who have been experiencing abuse and violent acts are more likely to have a number of serious health problems as compared to women who have not been abused or experienced any type of mistreatment. High or low blood pressure, pain in the joints, chronic pain, menstrual problems, other illnesses and diseases occur amongst women, who have experienced severe sexual trauma, severe childhood sexual abuse or some form of sexual victimization. The increased vulnerability to diseases and other health problems of abused women may be due to partly lowered immunity, due to the stress caused from abuse and mistreatment and mental suffering [5].
- **Suicide:** For women, who have been verbally or physically abused, tortured, harassed, raped and have undergone other forms of criminal and violent acts, the emotional and physical strain that have taken place within their mind-sets due to these can lead to suicide. These deaths are dramatic testimony to the scarcity of options for women to escape from violent relationships [5]. The prevalence of suicide amongst women is usually due to harassment for dowry. There has been an increase in the number of dowry deaths. When the families of the girls are not able to pay sufficient dowry, women are harassed and tortured, as a result of which they commit suicide.
- **Witnessing Violence on Children:** Research has indicated that children who witness domestic violence often undergo many of the same symptoms as children who have been physically or sexually abused. Girls, who witness criminal and violent acts on the part of their fathers, brothers or other family members observe that the treatment of their mothers is also more likely to accept violence as a normal part of marriage as compared to the women from non-violent homes. Boys, who have witnessed the same violence, on the other hand, are more likely to be violent to their partners, when they become adults [5].
- **Contribution towards Family and Society gets Reduced:** Women who have been experiencing violent and criminal acts reduces their contribution towards their family and society. They usually keep to themselves, have negligible interaction with the individuals around, have less or no potential towards self-realization, they are unable to make improvements in various aspects of living and are unable to progress in the performance of various tasks and duties [5]. The abilities and skills of women get hampered and they are not able to focus upon child development, take care of the elderly members of the households and get involved in the performance of household tasks. In order to acquire adequate contribution from the women towards enhancement of the living conditions, it is imperative to treat them with reverence and kindness.

Incidence of crimes and crime rate

Although women and girls are victims of criminal and violent acts and there have been prevalence of general crimes such as, murder, robbery, cheating, and so forth even in the present world. Only the crimes which are directed explicitly against women are referred to as crimes against women. Various new legislations have

been brought and amendments have been made in the existing laws with a view to handle these crimes in an operative manner. A total of 3,37,922 cases of crime against women, both under various sections of IPC and SLL were reported in the country during the year 2014 as compared to 3,09,546 in the year 2013, thus showing an increase of 9.2% during the year 2014 [6].

These crimes against women have continuously increased during 2010 to 2014 with 2, 13,585 cases reported in 2010, which increased to 2,28,649 cases in 2011, which further increased to 2,44,270 cases 2012 and 3,09,546 cases in 2013. In 2014, a total of 3,37,922 such cases were reported. Uttar Pradesh with 16.8% share of country's women population has reported nearly 11.4% of total crimes committed against them at an all India level, by reporting 38,467 cases and West Bengal accounting for nearly 7.5% of the country's women population, has accounted for 11.3% of the total cases of crimes against them in the country by reporting 38,299 cases during the year 2014. The crime rate under crimes against women was reported as 56.3 in 2014. Delhi UT has reported the highest crime rate of 169.1 as compared to 56.3 at all India level during the year 2014, followed by Assam, in which it is 123.4, in Rajasthan, it is 91.4, in Tripura, it is 88.0, in West Bengal, it is 85.4, in Madhya Pradesh, it is 79.0 and in Telangana, it is 78.3 [6].

Prevention strategies

The strategies that are put into practice to prevent criminal and violent acts against women have been stated as follows: [7].

- Promoting Gender Equality is a critical part of Violence Prevention:** The relationship between gender and violence is multifaceted. Evidence suggests, nevertheless, that gender disparities increase the risk of violence by men against women and hinder the ability of those affected to seek assistance, support and security. There are many forms of criminal acts and violence against women. The various forms of criminal and violent acts need to be prevented, making use of different prevention strategies. The most common form of violence is the one that takes place within the households. Though research studies need to be conducted to assess various forms of violent and criminal acts, indication shows that school, community and media interventions can promote gender equality and prevent violence against women by challenging stereotypes that give men power and authority over women.
- School Initiatives should be well placed to prevent Violence against Women:** In schools as well as in higher educational institutions, there has been prevalence of criminal and violent acts against women. Research has indicated that women have become victims of harassment, abuse and discriminatory treatment in schools and higher educational institutions. The individuals who have been involved include, teachers, professors, staff members as well as fellow students. Therefore, it is vital to initiate policies and programs in schools to curb criminal and violent acts against women. School based programmes can address the gender norms and approaches, before they become deeply ingrained within the mind-sets of the individuals. Such initiatives address gender norms, crime, violence and sexual abuse amongst the teenagers and young adults. It is vital that severe penalties should be imposed upon the individuals in schools and educational institutions, who are involved in committing these criminal and violent acts.
- Community Interventions can empower Women and engage with Men:** Community interventions can report gender norms and attitudes through the combination of microfinance schemes for women and methods that empower men as partners against gender-based violence. Financial problems have been one of the imperative reasons for prevalence of crime and violence against women. When men within the family are unable to satisfy the needs and requirements of their children, spouse and other family members, they may get engaged into criminal and violent acts against their wives, daughters, sisters as well as mothers. The strongest evidence is for the IMAGE micro-finance and gender equity initiative in South Africa and the Stepping Stones programme in Africa and Asia. Initiation of community programmes with male peer groups depict the change within the attitudes and approaches of the individuals towards traditional gender norms and restraining of violent behaviour, but they require more demanding assessments. Well informed and trained individuals and community ownership seem to increase the efficiency of these interventions.
- Media Interventions can alter Gender norms and promote the Rights of Women:** The promotion of public awareness campaigns and other interventions delivered via television, radio, newspapers and other mass media can be operative for transforming the attitudes and approaches towards gender norms. The most efficacious are those that seek to understand their target audience and engage with its members to develop content. The women who have been experiencing any forms of criminal and violent acts have the right to speak and raise their voice against them. There are non-government organizations, groups and associations that help women in addressing their grievances and solving their problems. The women belonging to deprived and disadvantaged groups are usually rescued through these organizations and associations. The problems of women are identified through communicating with them and making provision of space, so that they are able to speak about their problems and concerns freely and safely.
- Programmes must engage Men and Women:** There has been some evidence that micro-finance schemes have led to empowerment of women and do not involve men. This may lead to the occurrence of conflicts and disputes amongst them,

especially belonging to socio-economically backward sections of the society. Further research is required to explore how such problems can be solved. The individuals who are not educated and belong to deprived and marginalized communities, they desire for equal opportunities amongst the genders. The schemes that are available for the welfare of women, should be available for men as well, otherwise differences may take place amongst them. Therefore, this is one of the most effectual prevention strategies that equal opportunities and schemes should be initiated on an equal basis for both men and women.

- **Equality amongst Men and Women in Organizations and Educational Institutions:** There have been numerous cases of criminal and violent acts against women at the workplaces as well as in educational institutions. The individuals, who are involved in implementation of such acts include superiors, subordinates, colleagues, teachers, professors and fellow students. One of the most crucial areas is individuals need to realize the significance of education and form this viewpoint that they come to educational institutions to learn, to enhance their skills and abilities, to establish the traits of morality and ethics and to become good human beings. On the other hand, in employment settings, individuals need to communicate with each other with respect and courtesy and in order to acquire job satisfaction, they should establish appropriate terms and conditions with their colleagues, superiors and subordinates. To be successful in the performance of their work duties, individuals should treat women with kindness, politeness and reverence.
- **Forming appropriate Marital Relationships:** The prevalence of criminal and violent acts against women occur due to marital disputes. When two families are forming a relationship, it is vital, there should be mutual understanding between them. The spouses need to understand, be considerate, kind and helpful towards each other. Whenever any kind of misunderstanding or a problem takes place, they should solve it in a peaceful manner without getting angry and frustrated at each other. Men in some communities possess traditional beliefs that they have the right to control women and make women and girls vulnerable to physical and emotional violence. These viewpoints impede the abilities of women and girls to eliminate any forms of abusive situations and seek assistance. Therefore, the prevention strategies that apply in this case are, it is important for the individuals to understand the needs and requirements of women and girls, communicate with them in a respectful manner, possess a helpful and a caring nature and make provision of equal rights and opportunities.
- **Gender Equality:** Gender equality means, equal treatment of men and women in laws and policies, and equal access to re-

sources and services within the families, communities and the society at large. In some cases, as it has been stated above, men are considered as superior to women. Individuals desire for male children and give preference to the males within the families. Women are looked down upon and are not provided with similar rights as men. It is important for the individuals to bring about changes and transformations within their viewpoints. Women should be given equal share in the property, they should be permitted to get enrolled in schools and higher educational institutions, they should be allowed to get involved in employment opportunities, get involved in the making of decisions and allowed to give their ideas and suggestions to the male members within the households. These measures will lead to empowerment of women and they will feel that they are given equal treatment as men.

Conclusion

Women not only in India but throughout the world experience some sort of criminal and violent acts. These take place within the households as well as outside the households in educational institutions, workplaces or other public places. The various forms of criminal and violent acts include, verbal abuse, physical abuse, rape, sexual harassment, child marriage, female foeticide and female infanticide, dowry harassment, trafficking, acid attacks, pornography and domestic violence. The effects of these acts upon the mind-sets of women and girls are harmful and distressing. These acts prove to be the major impediments within the course of their growth and development. It is vital to put into operation, effective prevention strategies that would be understandable to all the individuals, irrespective of their background and status.

The implementation of preventive strategies and approaches would enable women to overcome submission to the legitimacy of the established orders, these are the important factors in the continuation of differences of power between women and men. If women are to put into practice their reproductive preferences, it is essential that their empowerment occur not only within the personal spheres, but also in the wider spheres of the community and the entire country. It is vital for the individuals in all areas to recognise that women too can be achievement oriented if they are provided with the opportunities.

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