



Forum: Sustainable Development Goals 10

Issue: Eliminating violation against women and their rights

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Introduction

Violence against women is nothing new or unheard of within our society irregardless of where a person lives, be it an LEDC or an MEDC. In most of our history, women have always been displayed as inferior, less valuable and more sensitive compared to men, and this idea is ingrained in some of the world's cultures, further encouraging the mistreatment of females. During 2017, around 87,000 women were intentionally killed, with more than half of them killed by their partners or family members. Everyone is entitled to the right to live undisturbed without living under the fear of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, misogyny etc. but this cannot happen if the rights of women across the world are constantly being violated.

Violation of women and their rights also take shape in the form of not allowing women to have certain rights men have in marriages, receiving a lower wage in comparison to their equal male counterparts, or girls being dress coded on school grounds for 'distracting boys'. In addition to this violence against women is present in our pop culture, from the TV, we watch music videos, we see song lyrics delivered by some of our favourite artists and advertisements we pass by everyday. It's normalised to the point we might not notice when we mindlessly consume the content presented by the media. Nowadays, women are often sexualised and objectified in movies or songs, creating the mentality that young girls need to be a certain way to fit a man's standards, harming their mental development. The younger they learn this the more susceptible they become to abuse since they fall under the impression that they must comply with men.

In a few countries, the governing body fails to place strict, clear laws to discourage or punish sexual harassment, domestic abuse or rape of women. In many cases there are laws for these matters, but the perpetrators are not given the proper punishment due to flaws within the legal system. In Turkey of 2018, 440 women were murdered by men, only to get away with reduced sentences. Over the world, a shocking number of 38% of women who were murdered were killed by an intimate partner. Femicide, the genocide of females, is a longstanding issue caused by the ignorance of people towards the heartless killing women but still happens because of this.



Definition of Key Terms

Femicide

The murder of a woman by her partner with an intent because of their gender. This also applies to young girls and is classified as an extreme form of discrimination and violence against women. It is usually carried out by men but can also involve female family members. For example, a mother can encourage their son to abuse their wife or partake in the act.

Misogyny

The prejudice of women presented as hatred or dislike in various ways such as, abuse, rape, physical intimidation, ostracism or social exclusion. This prejudice is ingrained in society's beliefs and is established as a norm.

Domestic Abuse

When a partner, or ex-partner performs manipulative, coercive, threatening or violent behaviour in a consistent pattern. Intimidation, degradation, isolation are used to control the victim from doing things their partner doesn't want them to do, for example going out with male co-workers or dressing revealingly. Domestic abuse is a form of gender based violence and is derived from the social inequality between men and women, as a result women are more likely to go through more incidents of domestic abuse and various types of them.

Sexual harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that someone takes offense to because it violates their dignity, or creates an uncomfortable, humiliating, hostile environment. Sexual harassment is a form of harassment that takes on a sexual nature. This includes pressure for sexual favours, unwanted sexual looks or gestures, or unwanted deliberate touching, leaning, and cornering. Even though sexual harassment (in workplaces) is illegal it is still rampant.

Rights

Rights are the legal, social and ethical principles of freedom granted to a person from the moment they are born until they die regardless of their gender, race, or location. At certain times these rights may be restricted, such as when someone violates a law. They ensure moral discipline and justice for all if abided by correctly, however not all members of society respect each other's rights or in some other cases rights are taken away from groups of society because they don't have access to basic facilities (e.g. hospitals, schools) or due to dangerous cultural norms.



Background Information

Violence towards women has been tolerated in many cultures and even worse, sometimes encouraged due to certain stigmas associated with women. Within the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns set as a protective measure, there has been a rise in domestic abuse endangering many people, including women, moreover across the world, more domestic violence helplines are receiving a rising number of calls for help. When an individual is confined for prolonged periods of time, stress and tension is created by health and financial worries, combine this with increasing isolation for women with their violent partners, there is a high risk of violent behaviour occurring. This is not the only reason domestic abuse happens, pandemic or no pandemic, there are multiple factors that affect this.

Religion

Religion is the personal belief of an individual that they engage in and affect their day to day life, and others surrounding them. Religious texts, teachings, communities and institutions disclose values to others taking part in the religion to convey the true message and practices of the religion. Despite this, a lack of information can cause people to twist the words of religious texts and justify violence against women by taking out texts from holy scriptures from their context and misinterpreting them. This can prolong abusive relationships, controlling sexuality and reproduction, victim blaming etc.

Consumption of alcohol and drugs

In a research published in the online journal PLOS-Medicine, it was found that men who are dependent on alcohol or drugs are six to seven times more likely to commit domestic abuse towards their female partner than other men are. Considering that alcohol use directly affects cognitive awareness and reduces self-control, it is no surprise that alcohol consumption leads to sexual violence. Also, many studies have recognised substance abuse as a factor in around 40-60% of incidents of domestic violence, either in causing the abuse or exacerbating it. 20% of domestic partner abuse involve drugs or alcohol before sexual violence take place, making the abuse 11 times more likely to happen. After an episode of violence happens, perpetrators will attempt to justify their action on alcohol use because of the individual and societal beliefs that alcohol causes aggression. Women stuck in abusive relationships often report that they were forced by their abusive partner to consume alcohol and drugs. Moreover, we must also consider that experiencing violence can lead to victims consuming alcohol as a way to cope with the mental damage, but this can mean that those surrounded by these victims may suffer as well, especially young children. The American Journal of Public Health stated that the usage of drugs tend to be more popular among women who suffer domestic abuse, including pregnant women.

Cultural influences



Cultural or social norms can reinforce rules and expectations, shaping an individual's behaviour and encourage domestic violence. Although often they are unspoken of, these norms construct the social standards of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. External and internal pressures maintain cultural and social norms, so individuals are discouraged from going against these damaging norms by the threat of social exclusion or punishment and feelings of guilt and shame that result from the internal acceptance of norms.

Female infanticide in China

Back when China's one child policy was still implemented, Chinese couples showed a major preference in a son as opposed to a daughter to the extent that they would kill their female child. This was rooted in the culture that when women marry a man, their children would not inherit the family's name and their economic loyalties would be transferred to the husband. Chinese cultural norms favoured male children because they were believed to deal with natural hardships such as famines, floods, widespread disease better.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

The World Bank

The World Bank has actively engaged with countries and partners in the prevention and addressing gender based violence (GBV) by supporting projects since 2003. The World Bank prioritises recognising the significance of addressing GBV in operations and are committed to this act and have provided over \$300 million in development projects, both standalone projects and through the integration of GBV components in projects focusing on specific sectors. E.g. in areas such as transport, education, social protection, and forced displacement.

Lessons on effective prevention and response interventions at community and national levels provided and are made by conducting analytical work paired with rigorous impact evaluation. The World Bank regularly holds a wide range of development stakeholders to share knowledge on the issue and build evidence on what is effective in addressing violence against women. Furthermore, they have supported initiatives to bring successful interventions to scale, build government and local capacity, and to contribute to the knowledge base of what works and what doesn't through continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Britain

In recent years, Britain has become one of the biggest government funder of programmes relating to the prevention of violence against women and girls globally after launching a £67.5m project,



which will span for 7 years, that targets countries with some of the highest levels of abuse. The programme called What Works to Prevent Violence specifically tackles Asia, The Middle East and Africa. This programme has so far proven to be successful in reducing violence in Asian and African countries. In Ghana, women in villages reported a 55% drop in violence by their sexual partner in over just 18 months.

Projects carried out by Britain used group sessions with both men and women to address the reasons for why male partners were violent, women were given the skills to become more financially independent and faith leaders were trained to challenge GBV in their religious practices/ activities. Other than expanding the What Works to Prevent Violence programme, Britain gives support to new projects that focus on communities recently struck by conflict and are in crisis and the high risk of domestic violence rises during conflicts; reaching women and girls most at risk, including those with disabilities and adolescent girls; addressing violence against children to stop violence passing from one generation to the next so that it is not normalised.

Iceland

Compared to the rest of the world, Iceland remains the globe's most gender-equal country for a consecutive nine years. Half of Iceland's parliament are women and the country has had a female president for 20 of the last 50 years. As of January 1st 2018, Iceland earned the title of being the world's first country to make paying men more money than women for doing the same job illegal. The new rule states that all companies and government agencies with a workforce of at least 25 people will have to obtain government certification that they have fulfilled the equal-pay policies. Employers will face fines if they are found to violate this law. The government reportedly plans to minimise and eradicate it by 2022 from an average of 16%.

United Nations (UN) Women

Dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women, UN Women is a body of the UN established in July 2010 to accelerate progress on meeting women's needs worldwide. Their main roles are to support the inter-governmental bodies, e.g. the Commission on the Status of Women in formulating policies and norms; helping member states implement global standards; and making the UN system responsible for committing to gender equality and regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

Over the decades, the UN has made significant progress in advancing gender equality by forming agreements. These are not limited to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Alongside other issues, UN Women works towards the elimination of discrimination against



women, their empowerment, and achieving equality amongst women as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
1848	The first woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, USA.
June 4th 1919	Women in the US were given the right to vote granted by the 19th amendment to the US Constitution.
1920	Doctors in Egypt stand up against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
1979	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly.
July 2010	United Nations Women was established.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325)
- Recommendation Rec(2002)5
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)10
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ("CEDAW", 1979)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Within parts of China, there have been intensifying contributions to end violence against women in China and Mongolia. The UNESCO Beijing Office have teamed up with governmental partners and other agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women that have provided support in the form of international experiences and suggested new articles compiled from all over the world to help in the drafting of China's new law targeting violence committed in the family towards women, children, the disabled and the elderly. Efforts were made both at the strategic and operational levels, the End Violence against Women Trust Fund (UN EVAW) Joint Programme on Preventing and Responding to Domestic



Violence in China, between 2009 and 2012, received funding from UNiTE while UNESCO encouraged the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) to implement a survey to provide baseline information on violence against women.

In the Philippines, rape is a common issue which also results in the unwanted pregnancies of many women, including young girls, further encouraging povert and overpopulation. To counter this, the public service announcement delivered rape prevention tips. Although these tips were made with good intentions, they reinforced victim blaming and held women accountable for rape. These so called tips were perceived by citizens as tone deaf oblivious.

Before reforms were made in Canada's criminal code, it was legally permissible for a man to rape his wife without any sanctions. Marital rape is the engagement of sexual intercourse with one's husband or wife against their will and without their consent, the majority of the time this is tolerated by the law because it is believed to not go under the category of rape. Fortunately, Canada was one of the countries that recognise the issue with marital rape and made a reform in 1983 addressing issues relating to sexual assault. Despite this change in the legislation, marital rape is still underreported, for example in 2014 the GSS found that only 19 per cent of spousal violence was reported to the police by the victims themselves. To highlight this issue even more, indigenous women don't feel included in society, feeling alienated from the Canadian justice system.

Possible Solutions

In most cases where women are sexually assaulted, abused or harassed, they are too uncomfortable to speak up on their encounters and are silenced by their communities or don't have a safe space to talk about their experience. It is vital that communities offer facilities that encourage women to raise their voice on their encounters so they can be provided with the needed help. Mental help also needs to be endorsed and stop being treated as a shameful topic so victims can be helped mentally and combat the trauma from the abuse they have faced.

The legal system plays a huge role in deciding how much justice is given to women, as opposed to the justice they truly deserve. Divorces often involve allegations of domestic violence, despite this, thel system would handle each issue as its own matter, One judge would handle the divorce while the other would listen to the domestic violence case. This would mean that judges hearing the divorce case might not have full information about the domestic violence allegations, and the divorce might not be granted to the woman. To counter this, reformations against court procedures need to be made so women are not stuck in an abusive relationship with their partner.

It isn't rare that women meet with homelessness and unemployment upon leaving destructive relationships. If they leave not only will they be suffering but also their children as a result of the fact that



divorces don't provide equal financial distributions. Nowadays, women occasionally get alimony by a judge and child support, but this is quite rare and child support is very minimal. To make matters worse, the gender wage gap impacts the salary of women and they will not have as much money as a man would to support themselves and their child. Both of these issues need to be tackled through creating changes in the system.

Guiding Questions

1. How is your delegation affected by this?
2. How is the violation against women normalised?
3. Why is domestic abuse more rampant in certain regions?
4. Why are some current or past actions not successful?
5. What could you take away from other countries' initiatives?
6. What could be done to help marginalised communities in the battle against sexual violence?

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Appendix or Appendices

- I. https://staticyali.state.gov/uploads/2016/03/USAID_LGL_FactSheet.pdf (Information on lack of access to education for women)



Limited access to education prevents women in becoming financially independent and needs to be addressed.

- II. <https://www.shethepeople.tv/blog/casual-sexism-indian-society-children/> (Casual sexism and its effects)

Casual sexism ingrains patriarchal ideologies into the minds of young children and contributes to the problem of misogyny.