

## Report of Seminar

Title of the Seminar:

*National Level Seminar on  
"Eliminating Violence against Women: Strategies And  
Legal Mechanism"*

Name and Address of Organization

*Gokhale Education Society's  
Shri Bhausaheb Vartak Arts, Commerce  
and Science College, MHB Colony,  
Gokhale Mahavidyalaya Borivali (W),  
Mumbai.*

Funding Organization

*Maharashtra State Commission for Women*



## **Background note of the subject matter of the Seminar:**

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread and devastating human rights violations in the world today. In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, there has been increased activity on both the national and international levels of research, to raise awareness and advocate for the prevention of all kinds of violence against women. Most often, violence against women has been framed as a health issue. However, even today many kinds of violence against women (specifically rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence) are under-reported, often due to societal norms, taboos, stigma, and the sensitive nature of the subject. To achieve lasting change, it is important to enact and enforce legislation and develop and implement policies that promote gender equality.

In the backdrop of this scenario, our college has organised a national seminar on the theme "Eliminating Violence against Women: Strategies and Legal Mechanism", in collaboration with Maharashtra State Commission for Women. The seminar deliberations will explore the causes and implications of violence and strategies and mechanism to eliminate violence. The seminar has received a good response in the form of research papers and articles. As many as 31 research papers and articles have been received for the seminar. This one-day seminar is a sincere effort to bring about intellectual discussions and deliberations among the researchers, which will provide deep insight into this vital issue.

We are thankful for the invaluable support of Maharashtra State Commission for Women in organizing this seminar.





**Objective of the Seminar:**

1. Improving the status and dignity of women in society.
2. To investigate into practices derogatory to women and to suggest remedial measures.
3. Effective monitoring and implementation of laws relating to women.
4. To advice the government on all matters related to improvement and upliftment of the status of women.
5. Providing counselling and free of cost legal advice to needy women.

**Outline of the Procedure adopted for conducting the Seminar:**

1. Firstly, the theme and objectives of the Seminar were formulated.
2. The audience was decided as to who and why they will be attending the Seminar. This was done in order to tailor the content to their needs.
3. College Assembly Hall was chosen as the venue for the Seminar.
4. Seminar structure was planned and sessions were timed out, as to how much time will be allotted to each session and resource person.
5. Relevant Resource Persons and Guests were contacted.
6. Target group and number of participants required were finalized.
7. Other Miscellaneous matters were decided.

**Proceedings:**

It was one-day National Seminar with two Technical Sessions, along with an Inaugural Session and Valedictory session. The first Technical Session was on "Legal Mechanism for Eliminating violence against Women". The second Technical session was on "Strategies for Eliminating Violence against Women".



### **Brief on inaugural function:**

After the traditional lighting of the lamp, the Principal Dr S.V.Sant introduced the dignitaries. She justified the need for this seminar, since violence against women has increased in society and needs to be addressed. She stated that violence against women is a serious issue and most of the cases go unreported. She thanked the Maharashtra State Commission for Women for funding this relevant seminar on "*Eliminating Violence against Women: Strategies and Legal Mechanism*". She then introduced the Chief Guest Dr. Manjusha Molwane, Member Secretary, Maharashtra State Commission for Women; she also introduced the Guest of Honour, Dr. R.J. Gujarathi, Vice-Chairman, Gokhale Education Society and the Keynote speaker Dr. Gita Chadha, Chairperson, Women Development Cell, University of Mumbai.

The Convenor of the seminar Mrs. Sushila Yadav, spoke on the backdrop of the Seminar and about the functions of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women.

In her inaugural session the Chief Guest of the seminar, Dr Manjusha Molwane, Member Secretary, Maharashtra State Commission for Women, acquainted the participants about the objectives of the Commission and its role in creating awareness about women empowerment and the violation of women's rights on various levels – physical, mental, emotional and financial. She referred to the kind of complaints addressed by the Commission and concluded her speech by giving the helpline number of the commission for the benefit of the participants.

The Guest of Honour, Dr R.J.Gujarathi, then, expressed his views on the theme of the seminar. He traced the atrocities on women from the epics to the present day, especially in rural areas. He stated that it is the male ego that is responsible for these atrocities and emphasized that unless the reasons for these violence were eliminated violence cannot end.

Dr. Gita Chadha, Chairperson, WDC, Mumbai University, delivered the Keynote Address. She acknowledged the role of women's movement of the 1970s in empowering women. She stated that it is not only men who need to





change mindsets but also women, since women too internalize the social conditioning regarding gender. She elaborated on three points. One, she claimed that the traditional notion that men are naturally aggressive and women weak, is a myth. It is only social conditioning and upbringing that make men and women the way they are and these can be easily changed or reconditioned. Second, problems against women are not homogenous; they vary with the class, state and region. She broadened the view of gender sensitizing by including the third gender, so society should give up the binary thinking of gender. Three, she pointed out that the patriarchal society affects men as much as women. Men are as pressurized into conforming to the traditional ideal of manhood. She concluded by mentioning the Sexual Harassment Act, 2013 and the attempt of the University to implement it in colleges through the setting up of WDC and Internal Complaints Committee in colleges.

The Inaugural session ended with a Vote of Thanks by the Vice Principal Dr R. P. Deshpande.

Ist Technical Session was on "*Legal Mechanism for Eliminating Violence against Women*". Prof Sachin Pawar coordinated this session. Advocate Sanjay Dubey was the first resource person of this session. He shared his experience with cases of violence and stated that unfortunately legal mechanism alone is not enough. Statistics about violence against women, provided by him, confirmed this view. Girls below 18 years of age are the most vulnerable according to him. He wondered why the government does not amend laws until after a crime is committed. He referred to some judgments of the Supreme Court such as the Triple Talaq judgement. He also spoke on trafficking of women and children, which according to him is a major violation of human rights. According to him delayed legal justice encourages criminals, therefore timely implementation of legal mechanism is very essential to curb violence against women.

The second resource person of the session, Advocate Sanjay Jaiswal elaborated on three Acts – POCSO Act 2012, Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013 and the Domestic Violence Act, 2005. He explained the steps in the redressal under these Acts in great detail and in a very simple





manner. He explained the difference between IPC, juvenile justice and POCSO. He emphasized that all laws are in favour of women and women should avail of these laws to empower themselves. He urged the women participants to have self-respect, to be more aggressive and raise their voice against any kind of violence and harassment. He also stressed on speedy implementation of the legal mechanism so that justice is done to the victims.

The chairperson of the session Dr. Asmita Vaidya, Principal NBT Law College, Nashik; spoke on Cyber Crimes. After defining Cyber Crime she talked about the Information Technology Act, 2000 which was passed to deal with crimes in the field of ecommerce, e-governance and e-banking. Showing the trend in the cyber crime from 1997 to 2013, the graph clearly revealed the rise in cybercrimes during the period. She classified Cyber crime into four categories- crimes against persons, crimes against property, crimes against government, and against society at large. Women, she felt, were as vulnerable in cyber space as in the real world. She enumerated the reasons for such crimes. She concluded by giving the preventive measures to be taken by individuals, especially women, to avoid being victims of cyber crimes.

This was followed by the question answer session, where all three resource persons fielded the questions of the participants. The question answer session raised a debate whether the law is equal for men and women. Some participants contested that the law was more in favour of women which was unfair to men. The resource persons then explained the need for such laws.

The II Technical Session was on "*Strategies for Eliminating Violence against Women*". The session was conducted by Ms. Suhas Sawant. The chairperson, Dr. Mihir Parekh, and the resource persons were welcomed by the Principal Dr. Mrs. S.V.Sant.

The first resource person, DCP Sangramsingh Nishandar (Mumbai Zone XI) made the participants aware about the measures taken by the Police to protect women against violence. He highlighted the threats in the cyber world to society and gave guidelines about the course of action to be taken by the victims. He explained crimes against women such as morphing and defamation, cyber stalking, cheating using matrimonial sites. The Domestic





Violence Act, 2005 and the sections pertaining to these crimes were explained in detail. He also elaborated on the measures taken by the Maharashtra Police for Safety of Women that includes the ITPA Act, Social Security Cell and Mahila Suraksha Samitee, Police Didi Yojana, Special Police Mobile Van, POCSO Cell at every police station and anti eve-teasing squad- at police station level. He highlighted the steps for Gender Sensitization among police staff. He also explained the rights of women while filing an FIR. He answered the queries of participants satisfactorily.

Mr. Kalbe Abbas Dodhiya (Assistant Editor of Hindustan Times) put forth the media's perception about violence against women and the role of the media in eliminating it. He emphasized the fact that media has to be more effective in order to curb violence. He also stated the guidelines given by the Charter of United Nations in eliminating violence. He highlighted on the role played by media in bringing forth cases of violence against women and sensitizing the society regarding cases of violence against women.

Dr. Mihir Parekh, Psychologist, the chairperson of the session highlighted the psychological effects of violence on women and children in the society. He explained how women are treated as objects which have ever lasting emotional impact on them. He enumerated types of violence recorded against women. He explained the short and long term effect on women and the psychological impact on the women and their families. The psychological effects vary from denial and silence to low self-esteem, shame and guilt. It may even lead to serious emotional problems such as isolation, depression and suicidal tendencies. Talking about the effects on children of women who have been traumatized by violence, he narrated cases of children who were vulnerable, especially in the case of domestic violence where the children are spectators. He explained the methods used by psychologists in helping such children cope with the trauma. He concluded his session by giving some concrete ways to overcome these problems such as sensitizing the male child and empathizing with women.

Following the II<sup>nd</sup> session there was a plenary (open) session chaired by Dr. Mamta M. Muthal, Principal, Raisoni Institute of IT, Nagpur and Ms. Pradnya Saraf, Vice-President, Stree Mukti Sanghatana. In this session papers were





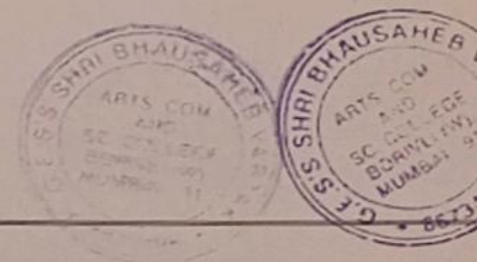
presented by Dr. Satwant Balse, Mrs. Tanuja Koli, Miss. Megha R. Yadav, Mr. Hadley Quadros, Mrs. Albina Joshi and Assis. Professor Aparna Kulkarni.

Ms. Pradnya Saraf started the session with a talk on various activities conducted by Stree Mukti Sanghatana for women. She focused on current issues of violence against women like Tanushree Datta against Nana Patekar. She pointed out the difficulties and obstacles faced by victims of violence to get justice. She suggested that there is a need to spread moral values among the people, provide education and training of self dependence strategies to girls, need for proper and quick implementation of laws in any such kind of violence, need for change in attitude of men about women. Social organisations have to take initiatives to prevent violence and provide support to women before and post violence and in the society women must get freedom to take their own decisions.

The following selected papers were presented in the Open Session.

Dr. Satwant Balse from KET's V.G. Vaze College, Mulund, presented a paper on **"Towards Equalising Sex Ratio: A Study of Punjab"** in which she threw light on the unfavourable child sex ratio in Punjab due to Female Foeticide. The reasons for the skewed sex ratio are preference for a son, honour of family, small family norms and ultra sound technology on sex, marriage age among the population, reverse dowry system and preference for NRI partners for marriage. She finally suggested that government, political parties, NGO's, media and state committee for women have to pay attention to this serious issue and play a vital role in solving it.

Mrs. Tanuja Koli from Chetana College, Bandra in her paper on **"Understanding Violence against Women: An Intersectional Approach"**, pointed that survival of women in the society is a crucial problem everywhere because of the intensity of different kinds of violence against women. According to her the complicated caste system, inequality of property and wealth, political gains are the reasons behind violence against women in the country. She drew attention on the plight of Dalit women who are highly





affected because of low education among them, patriarchal system of society and identity of caste.

After that Miss Megha R. Yadav from Thakur College presented a paper on **“Rape and Molestation of Women in India”**. She focused on the Nirbhaya case of December 2012. She pointed out that it was only after this case that the anti-rape bill and anti-rape law were passed in the country. Miss Megha stressed on the need of awareness programmes, about bad touch and good touch through education and change in attitude which could help to solve the problem of violence.

Mr. Hadley Quadros of Andrew’s College, presented a paper **“Purification Tale: Muted Voices of Women of the Dawoodi Bohra Community”** about the gruesome ritual of female genital mutilation practised in some countries like Africa, Egypt and India. It is seen as a form of purification and is performed on girls between the age of seven and fifteen. The paper refers to this practice as barbaric and violence against women through religious sanctity. Unlike countries like UK, Canada and Australia, India is still to make this practice illegal. He stated reforms in laws and making women physically and psychologically strong as solutions for this practice.

Assistant Professor Albina Joshi of St. Gonsalo Garcia College of Arts and Commerce, Vasai (W) presented a paper on **“Online Violence against Women in India”**. She pointed out that these days it is very easy to spread violence in society through media and electronic devices from any place, at any time. She drew attention to the disadvantages of online and media in case of women. She highlighted the direct and indirect attack of online communication on women through SMS, MMS, Photos, Calls, and Mail etc. with case study of Kerala. Her observation shows that 89 percent cases of violence against women are not reported. She suggested legal provision, government initiatives, and change in mind set of men as means to help solve this problem.

Assistant Professor, Aparna Kulkarni from Thakur Ramnarayan College of Arts and Commerce, Dahisar, in her paper **“Analysis of**



**Objectification of Women in the Indian Society and its Effect on Women**” emphasised that the materialistic approach of men about women is the cause of violence. She noted that men considered women as sexual objects which affect the privileges and human rights of women. She drew attention to different forms of objectification, the serious issues related with it, the role of media in increasing objectification, the effects of objectification. She noted solutions for it that integration of women, awareness among the women, motivating women through female idols in the society.

After all the presentations, Assistant Professor, Prachi Kadam, coordinator of the session, requested the Chairperson of the session Dr. Mamta Muthal to express her views on the presentations. She accepted the views of the paper presenters and believes that the system of the society is the major cause of violence against women. She suggested that change in the materialistic attitude of people and respect for women and their talent would go a long way in eliminating violence.

#### **Valedictory Session:**

This was followed by the valedictory function chaired by Advocate Ashraf Ahmed Shaikh (General Secretary, United Nations Assistant for Human Development, Mumbai). He talked about the tortures inflicted upon women by the society. He emphasized on how educating women can be helpful in eradicating the violence against them. He concluded by reading out the message of Secretary General, United Nations, regarding violence against women which stressed on the zero tolerance against sexual abuse. He suggested taking quick action on any kind of the violence against women. He advised men to support women to prevent such type of violence and to take action on it.

The session was concluded with the vote of thanks given by the convenor of the seminar Mrs. Sushila Yadav.

The Seminar was well attended with 70 participants from 14 colleges from 5 Universities participated in the Seminar. The research papers were published in Peer Reviewed Referred and UGC Listed Journal (Journal No. 40776) with Impact Factor/Indexing 2018- 5.5.

