

Women Empowerment

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Abstract: From the very beginning, being subjected to oppression, not being given the right to voice their opinions, expected to dress “appropriately”, their roles being limited to raising children, starting families and taking care of the house, women’s condition has been malevolent and in penury. Ever since the foundation of the society has been laid down, the reigns have been in the hands of the chauvinistic and hot headed men who tend to have a smug, self satisfied ego with them being convinced that they are the drivers of the society and their households, never realizing the fact that the women have been the source of nourishment of the society without whom, the pillars of the society would have never stood on their own. This paper focuses on a plethora of instances and a diverse variety of problems faced by the women of our nation be it urban or rural in terms of various arenas and avenues. This paper involves secondary and primary collection which had been collected by means of two questionnaires separately focusing on rural and urban women which then have been analyzed with the help of graphical depictions and tabular data. The conclusion drawn on the basis of this study varies from diversely positive to negative and also brings in the role of the state in curtailing the oppression of women and weakening the ramshackles of hegemony where the men have always been the rulers.

Keywords: Women, women empowerment, Discrimination, Rural and urban Women, Poverty, Sexual Harassment, Violence, Gender discrimination, Sex ratio, Education, Health

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In a country like India, where women are placed on a pedestal equivalent to that of goddesses, the same nation has had a long history of suppressing and neglecting the women class. A nation which is on one hand, is in limelight for its constantly progressing trajectory of growth and undergoing tremendous development, on the other hand has long lost its fame due to the deteriorated status and treatment of women. The image of the nation has been scarred and maligned by the portrayal of women as inferior and objectifying the women.

Even though the country is said to be progressing and advancing in terms of technology and GDP, the presence of orthodox mindset and dominance of dogmas tends to pull the country backwards. These have been long carried forward from one generation to the other and are a concoction of a variety of different forms and extents.

Though, the situation has shown a considerable improvement in the urban areas due to a rising acceptance of women as equals and a prominent section of the society, it still prevails in evil forms in the rural areas or even urban areas which are disguised in their own forms.

And the worst part of it, there is no scope such discriminated women or even the victims subjected to heinous crimes for betterment so that they can move on in their lives and create their own identities instead of being defined by the incidents where they did not even have a say.

Women empowerment or enabling the women to create their own identities and taking their decisions independently without anyone having a say in it is a ray of light in such dark despairs of their lives.

Creating hope, inculcating faith and generating opportunities for them can change the situation drastically.

Treatment as an equal- with equal say in each matter as the men, having voting rights, a feeling of being respected and not being treated as a mere object for satisfying one’s needs, not being treated as burden, having the right to get educated which even our constitution grants but we as people exercise our dominance and consider ourselves higher than the law in depriving them of it, helping them to come out of traumas subjected to them be it sexually, physically and mentally instead of being reprimanded and being blamed for the injuries inflicted upon her. We as a society need to help them emerge stronger out of it and not defining them by it r forcing them to keep mum if she tries to raise her voice against it.

The need of the hour is to recognize the plight of the ailing women and work as one united nation for their empowerment, betterment and enabling them to take lead one step at a time.

The changes to be brought are infinite but the initial and urgent requirement is to bring about a change in our perspectives and realize the fact that A WOMAN is the most powerful creature God has ever made. Only a woman is capable of reciprocating with double intensity whatever is given to her and she undoubtedly unquestionably is the greatest creation of God and needs to be treated like one.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

Woman empowerment- as powerful as it sounds, it has even a deeper impact on the lives of those women who have recognized their potentials and have risen above the shackles of the society which bind them and hold them back. Providing them with opportunities to excel in their lives, having faith in them and working towards achieving the heights they can reach is the only solution for their betterment.

- The objective is the same: To go deeper into the problem, understand their plight and working towards their betterment as one united organization is the sole aim which can improve their lives way beyond anyone can imagine.
- Empowering the strongest- the irony of our nation is such. The objective is to work together and place the women on a level above and help them live a better life with dignity and pride.
- The objective of this paper was to understand what are the major problems faced by the women of our nation on a day to day basis
- To classify the problems into urban and rural and understand better the extent of skewness of the problems
- To understand how different is the condition of the urban women from the rural women

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sadly, Indian's of the 21st century have massive celebrations if a baby boy is born, but if it is a baby girl no celebration is more than normal. The love Indians have for a male child is so much that they are killing their daughters before birth or at birth. Fortunately, if the baby girl is not killed they find many ways to discriminate her throughout her whole life. Even though the religious backgrounds of Indian's make woman seem like a goddess, today woman are barely recognized as a human being. Today Indian people worship goddesses but exploit their girls. India is a society that has two standards for their attitudes towards woman. Any Indian female is at more risk of gender discrimination than almost anyone in the world. India is ranked about 101st on the global gender scale, and it is not getting any better, only worse.

Women empowerment and gender equality are the two sides of the same coin.

Be it empowering women or be it giving them equal treatment as the men, the aim remains the same. For ages, women have been seen as the ones whose duties are just constrained to getting married, giving birth, doing household chores and devoting herself to the service of her husband no matter how pervert or demanding or subjugating he may be.

They have never been seen as the ones who can move outside the boundaries set by the social norms and the society for them and create an individual identity for themselves.

Ever since our childhoods, we have been taught that girls are delicate and ought to behave that way. They are supposed to preserve their dignity, be shy and very feminine unlike the males of the society who have been taught that they are the bread earners of the family and should be strong and powerful and exert their dominance.

Even a thought as small as "Boys don't cry" has left a deep impact in the minds of the children who throughout their lives are kept from crying and expressing their emotions openly fearing that this can make them appear weak.

Our society has always been a parochial one with the stigmas and beliefs being carried forward since ages and ironically, it is rooted so deep in our mindsets that it is not an easy task to pull it out of there.

Our society has very conveniently assigned roles to men and women based on their understanding and the roles of men are seen as superior to that of women. They are valued higher than that of the women.

The differential treatment of men and women still exists prominently in our society from where the gender related crimes and violence emerge. The silence of the victims makes it even more prominent and the problem is further aggravated.

India, as a nation has seen a lot of progress in terms of its economic and technological advancement but unfortunately, is way behind from achieving a harmonious and a holistic growth. A nation where men are still superior to women, where girl child is still killed in the womb, where girls are not granted their rights and where still behind the shut doors, every other woman is being subjected to the evils of her husband, such is the saddening truth of India.

Women have always been subjected to the whims of their spouses; be it domestic violence, be it marital rape or be it mental and emotional assault all of which has never been seen as virulent but as a normal phenomenon of the “PIOUS RELATIONSHIP”.

What we call pious has already been polluted by these self satisfying demons the ordeals of whom are silently borne by the woman as her duty towards her husband.

The same child, who has been taught not to cry, had he been taught to respect the opposite gender and to raise their voices against the unacceptable, would’ve made a significant difference today.

“SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT THEY SAY”. The blame is on the head of the victim who was subjected to the desires of a man who “lost his control”. It all begins from birth; and the perpetrators are never questioned.

The ordeals of a woman begin from the womb; when her parents decide her birth depending upon whether she is a burden or an heir. The illegal, yet very essential cycle of sex determination begins and if the unfortunate little fetus is SHE, her right to life is taken away from her even before she is born. And then they say “OUR CHILD IS NOT GETTING A SUITABLE GIRL TO MARRY”. A skewed sex ratio leaves the heir unmarried and incapable of expanding the family tree.

And if luckily she is brought into the world, she has an altogether different array of situations to deal with. Born or unborn, it seems that the fate of the WOMAN is definitely marred.

2.1 Son Preference and Female Foeticide

Female foeticide- death before birth ironically is illegal yet legally prevalent. India has a tremendously skewed male to female sex ratio. An alarming rate of 921 females per 1000 males is a deep concern for the nation and this problem unfortunately is not exclusively limited to the rural areas. This problem is prevalent even in the most affluent families who are in desire of an heir.

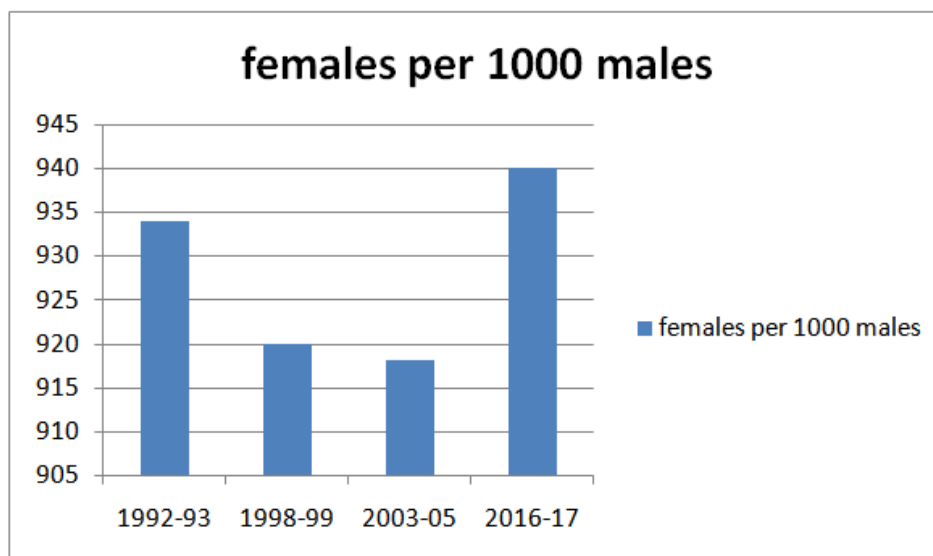
Factors responsible for such an act to be committed are various- economic factors which see the girls as financial burdens such as dowry and also due to the unequal wages given to females for the same work. Penurious families who are poverty stricken prefer to get rid of Her than to bring her into the world.

Socio economic factors too, give face to this problem which are the so called physical assaults, rapes, subjugation and deprived in their lives. Parents do not want their children to undergo such traumas and hence prefer not to give birth to them. They also kill the girl child in order to have a “complete family” with at least one son.

The desire of a son leads to the so called “sex determination” which apparently is banned by our government but malpractices always tend to exist where there are restrictions. This gives birth to illegal sex determination and the abortions that follow. This problem is certainly more existent in the rural areas though they do not have the means to go for a sex determination. So they resort to another way; female infanticide. Giving her birth and then taking her life.

This practice has serious repercussions which reflect primarily in a misbalance of genders with more males per female. This will aggravate the injustices and violence against them- prostitution and sex trafficking.

In our nation, girls are underrepresented in birth and overrepresented in deaths. The preference for sons is so strong that it is manifested as limiting the births of girls.



Graph showing the live female births per 1000 male births

A recent study of the population in India showed that postnatal deaths are also prevalent where a girl child aged 1-5 years is 75% more likely to die before the completion of 5 years than a boy of the same age group. Infanticide ratio stands at 76 male infant deaths compared to the 100 female infanticides while it stands at 122 in other nations. India has the worst child sex ratio in the world and it is predominantly explained by the socio economic norms and values. Such is the neglect of our girls. They are disadvantaged even in terms of healthcare, food and nutrition and emotional wellbeing.

4.6 million girls were not allowed to be born alone between 2001 and 2008 alone. Gender based selection is the preference of males over girls as girls are considered to be a burden. The cost of dowry and worry about a girl's physical safety make them prefer boys over girls. The parents ironically see no value in a girl.

Harayana has the nation's worst sex ratios which stands at a meagre 830 girls for 1000 boys.

The main agenda is to sensitize the approach of the male children towards the females and question the existing societal norms. It is essential for them to understand that what they have been fed with all their lives that girls are sensitive and girls are subordinate to them has long lost its significance and in today's scenario, women are equal and in some areas even ahead of men. It is in this tender age that mentalities and individual opinions take form and go with them for the rest of their lives. Hence efforts have been made to improve the conditions by making the people realize that girls are not a liability. They are strong enough to withstand the storms of the world and emerge even stronger.

2.2 Deprivation of choice

It is seen that in India, the fate of the girl child is pre-decided. The moment she is brought into this world, it is very evidently decided that she anyway has to get married and devote herself to her husband and his family. She is expected to do all the household chores and bring up her children.

No one has ever asked them what they truly want out of their lives or whether or not they want to get married at so early an age and bring up her own children in the age when she herself is supposed to go out and play with the other children of her age. She is not offered a choice of her own and no control over her own life. On the other hand, the same parents, if have a son born to them will go beyond every means possible to educate him so that he can get a decent job and become the bread earner of his family. Why this contrast?

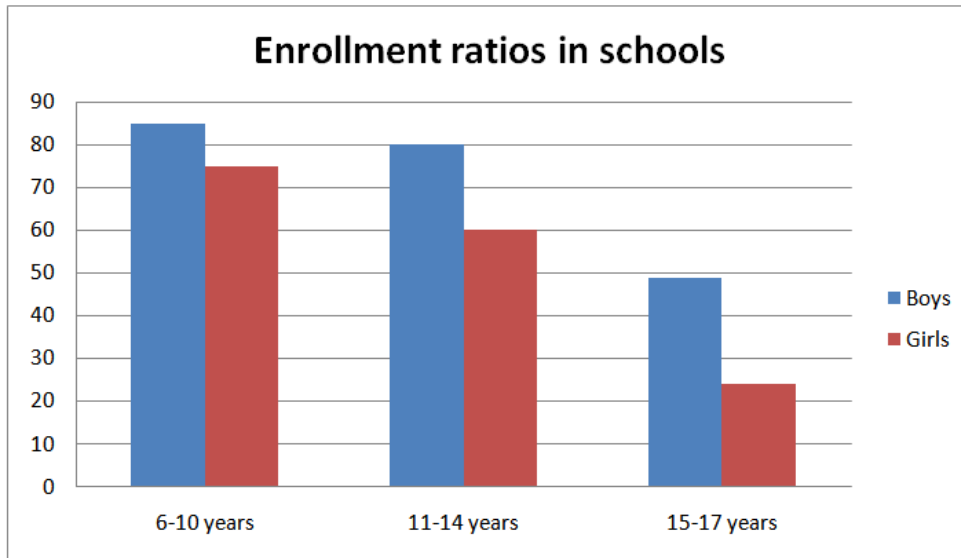
Because, in our society, especially the still orthodox and rural families of the nation still think that girls are a liability and have to be married off as soon as they are sane enough or rather fertile enough. Thus, they are deprived of the choice to study further even if they want to, forced to drop out and get married and learn all the household work that they are born to do.

This creates a cycle of widespread miseries and problems. Our nation is one of the countries having the largest population in the slums and rural areas and so the problem is even more aggravated there. One third of our girls are married before they enter their teens and our nation also has the highest number of children born to children. Imagine the plight of the girls who are forced to mother the children in the age when she herself needs her mother for everything. Case study of Kiran Rani

Kiran rani, mother of an 11 year old girl when spoken about her girl dropping out of school said that her daughter has better prospects of housekeeping as this is the work she has to do after she gets married. She said that she pulled her daughter out of school after she completed her class 6 and that now, she can assist her in earning and can earn a fair amount by working as a maid in houses. This situation is very much common in the rural and the poor strata of our society where our girls are seen more as maids and house helps instead of seen as sitting in classrooms and studying

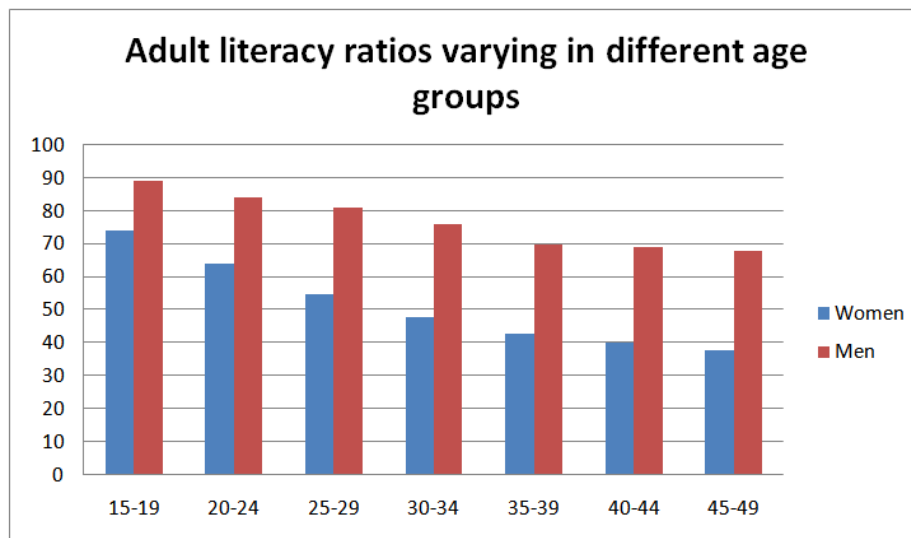
2.3 Dropping out of Schools: Gender Differences in Schools

Key findings Sex ratio of girls to boys attending school is a skewed 889 girls per 1000 boys. The female disadvantage in schools increases with a rise in age particularly in the rural areas. School dropout rates are very high among females in rural areas the reasons behind which are numerous and some pretty valid. 41% of women have never been to school and for those who have been, the maximum education attainment is till the 7th or the 8th grade after which they are forced to leave school. Indeed, while Karnataka has a dropout rate of 2.3 per cent, which is below the national average, Rajasthan's, at 8.39 per cent, is double the national rate, and Manipur's is four times, at 18 per cent.



Graph showing the skewed enrollment in schools in rural areas.

4.6% girls in India drop out of schools between class 7 and 8 each year. The parents feel that this is the maximum the girl should study and now focus more on her marriage and household. This phenomena of dropping out is a manifestation of many reasons namely poverty, hygiene, unsafe environment, and early marriage. The adult literacy ratios of men and women have largely deviated values where women are significantly less in number.



All of the conditions are interrelated and give rise to one another. Even if the child wishes to study further, she is deprived of the choice to do so and forced to sit at home. Some willingly drop out due to prevalence of harassment in the premises or the surroundings. It is high time that we need to raise a voice against the perpetrators of such environment and take actions against this. Girls being uncomfortable with such incidences are forced to sit at home incapable of resisting the injustice against them. Moreover, the onset of puberty forces many to drop out due the unhygienic conditions and lack of healthcare facilities. Even if a few parents are willing to send their girls to school, the girls are discouraged due to their menstrual cycles setting in which is still a taboo in the rural areas and there are no sufficient conditions to deal with them. The unclean washrooms are another significant contributor to the same.

Harassment in the school premises and on the way to school is also one of the major reasons. Such is the irony of our society; the girls are not encouraged to continue their education. And if by any chance they are, they are forced to withdraw due to misbehavior of some of the most outrageous people of the society. All of this begins at childhood where they have not been told by their parents that all girls are to be respected and treated with the same dignity they are to be treated with. Inculcating this in the minds of the youngsters at an early age

can bring out a significant difference. And it is equally important not to be silent spectators to such indecency being committed and raise voice against it. A major issue came to light when we realized that it is since the very birth that boys have been taught that they are superior to women.

“Boys don’t cry, girls do”

“Boys are stronger than girls.”

“Girls can’t play.”

All these stereotypes have been firmly placed in the minds of the youngsters and this takes form of dominance in the later stages resulting in such heinous crimes today. The sense of being superior and more powerful is the reason for most of the injustices against the women class.

It is important to realize that all are equals and the actions of all should be holistic. It is necessary to pull out the problem from the root which is infecting our society.

2.4 Education in Schools

One major factor that came to light in the schools is that there is not enough education and awareness being imparted about the basic issues and situations in our society.

For example, sex education

The schools till date do not allow the significant and important facts about sexual activities to be given out openly which to some extent is very important. The teens have to be aware about such things and if not talked about, take different routes most commonly the internet to satisfy their thirst about such issues. As a result, they tend to possess incomplete knowledge. They are not talked to about contraception, safe sexual activities and even menstrual cycles. All this has reduced to a taboo and people are still reluctant to talk about it openly.

In schools, teachers tend to skip the chapter on human anatomy which actually needs to be talked about. Girls are asked not to talk about periods openly. India still has a long way to go in curbing the taboos that still grip the mindsets.

2.5 Early marriage- A loss of childhood

Key findings

One third of the child brides live in India. Our nation also has the highest number of children born to children. Girl children in rural areas are married generally by the time they hit their teens. The phenomenon of child brides and early marriages sets in itself a whole new dimension of suppression of the woman. It brings with itself a vicious circle and a trap of adolescent exploitation, sexual harassment, domestic violence and a lifelong subordination to the husband. Though this practice is very rare among the urban cities, it is very common in the rural areas. The child, as soon as she is seen ready to bear the responsibilities of the household, she is married off to another man whom she has to serve. In a tender age, she is burdened with the endless responsibilities of her in laws and her home. She is supposed to do all the household work, cook and devote herself to their service. And after all of this, she is also supposed to prove her worthiness by proving she is fertile. She is expected to bear children within a few months of her marriage when she herself is not ready to bear the burden. Her body is impoverished, and she is incapable of handling a child yet she gives birth to a child who in most cases is premature and underweight. She is deprived of the opportunities she deserves.

Child marriage in itself is an entire package which brings with itself altogether a wide array of possible ways to demean her. Now that she is married, she is also supposed to devote her body to her husband- when she is unaware of the sexual activities. The husband on the other hand, cannot hear a no- it possibly challenges his masculinity and he forces him on her. This is a form of rape and sexual assault on the girl who is left traumatized but according to the society, there is nothing termed as “Marital rape” or rape by husband. According to them, it is normal since they are married and have to consummate their marriage.

The word “consent” holds no meaning in a woman’s life right from her birth.

According to the United Nations, Rajasthan has the second highest number of child brides in India and ranks second in the world for this social evil.

Child marriages inflict mental instability upon the minds of the child. They are left emotionally shaken and stirred and are unable to cope up with the pressure and sudden load of work and expectations from them. Nearly 60% of the girls in some states are married off before the age of 18.

The Story of Sushila

Sushila (name changed), was married as a child and laments the fact that she was not allowed to study further. She was not given the choice she wanted.

Her parents did not give her much of a choice and married her off. She left her house and was burdened with new duties and responsibilities. She could not cook meals but was expected to prepare food for the family.

She now is 55 years old but looks back with a sigh and thinks how life could have been had she been given the choice to make her decisions. She yearns to be a child again and live her life all over again .An early marriage denies a girl access to education, health and other opportunities. It is a violation of human rights and violence against young women, the consequences of which, follows them well into adulthood.

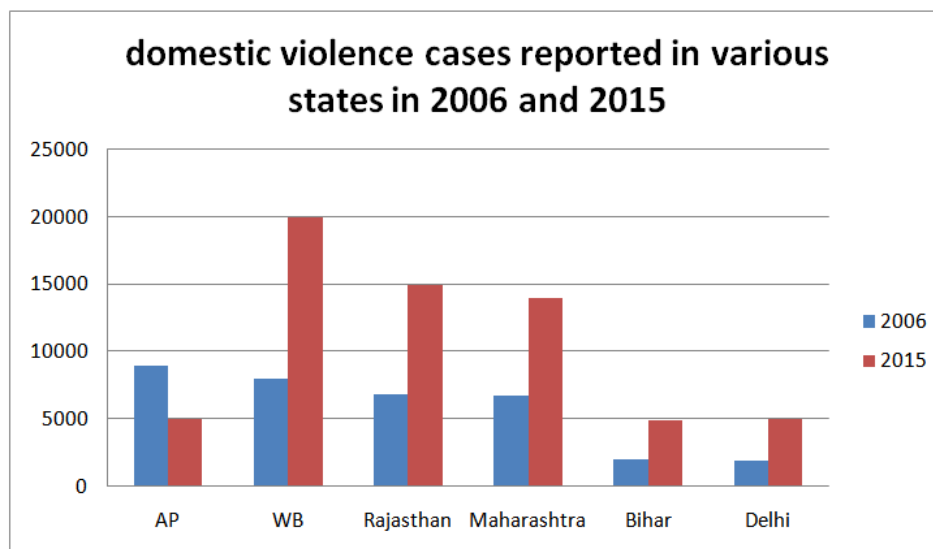
2.6 Domestic violence and suppression by the spouse

Key findings

Slapping is the most common type of violence. The silent oppression grips the lives of about 26 million women. But a majority of the cases go unspoken about, hidden behind the closed doors of houses. Women do not report such treatments out of fear and to avoid getting their images tarnished.

About 2 in 5 women face violence by their husbands in their marriages.

The child brides and the girls who were married at a tender age seem to form a significant part of the lot. The so called divine bond of marriage gives unmatched authority and power to the men who consider it their birth right to treat women as a medium of exercising their powers. Day in and out we hear news reports talking about battered women, beaten up brutally by their husbands out of frustration or maybe just for the sake of showing their authority. And ironically, though we all know it is a virulent phenomenon, we still do not raise our voices against the wrong being done. We prefer to keep out of the so called family matters of other people. We are the perpetrators of such injustices being faced by women because we are the silent spectators. Out of a humungous number of cases, majority of them go unreported to avoid facing humiliation.



The graph shows that as compared to 2006, 2015 showed a significant rise in reported domestic violence cases showing that women have now started coming out of their fear and raising their voices.

Domestic violence can be inflicted in many ways be it physical, emotional or sexual depending upon the whims of the husband. Many women are oppressed and face violence for dowry as well. The men drink till they lose their senses and come home to inflict wounds on the woman they rightfully accepted as their wives and sure enough they are exerting their rights fully on her. This is a typical and the most common scenario in our nation.

The story of a survivor

Her husband was an alcoholic and addicted to gambling. He would constantly abuse her, physically and psychologically, treating her like a sex slave and not like a human being. He kept beating her even while she was pregnant. One day while he was gambling, he lost all of his money so he used her as currency to pay his debts and sold her to another man for a month. After 3 years of marriage and abuses he left her and the daughter for another woman and refused to pay her alimony. Today she is still fighting to get the financial help he owes her.

-Anonymous

Her husband started abusing her after she gave birth to a female child. The beatings were so bad that she lost her hearing on one side. The husband would rape her constantly in the attempt to have a male child. When Sayeeda got pregnant again and they found out it would be another girl the beatings got worst. Her sister moved in with her to make sure she wouldn't end up killed by the husband. After the birth of her second

daughter she reported the husband and left. Both Sayeeda and her sister went back to their father's home, where they are currently living with their children.

-Sayeeda

Marriages end up giving endless powers to the husbands and make wives their subordinates. They are supposed to obey everything he says, yield him an heir and devote her body to him for the rest of her life. Such is the plight of women in our rural society till date. Things sometimes seem rosy while sometimes their days end in deep despair hoping for help and a brighter future ahead. Most of them still are at the service of their men who cannot put an end on the miseries inflicted by them on their wives. Beating them up, abusing them, using them, this all has become a daily routine for them. But it is high time we as a society and individually as a citizen need to take steps to put an end to this. Subordination is not the sole purpose of a marriage. This has to be understood by the men who will then try and treat women with the same respect they expect in return. Sex is not the sole pillar of Marriage and the wife's consent is equally important. Men can't take a no. The power and authority takes such a bad turn that apart from being subjugated objectified and being suppressed, even the financial arena has proved to be one with oppression for the women. The women in the rural areas, who work to make their ends meet and earn to fulfill their bare minimum requirements, are pressurized to give up their salary to the husband who can then spend it according to his choice. They have no say in this matter. They also have no right on the financial resources of the household apart from already being a mute spectator and a victim of all kinds of injustices. They have no say in the decision making of the households and even on how their own earnings have to be utilized. The husband is by default the head of the family and she has to function to please him. It is his right to exercise power on her and most people even parents of the girls consider it okay to once in a while receive a beating from the husband. According to them, it is pretty normal for a married couple to get into heated arguments. This scenario is still prevalent on one hand while on the other, the women are progressing and walking with head held high everywhere they go. This is a sad picture that we have taken such big leaps ahead in time that we have left our rural counterparts behind. We need to work together and bring them to join hands with us in this race of time.

2.7 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is nothing but the manifestation of male desires and whims which takes the form of harassment upon women. Women are already very much objectified and treated as mere means of enjoyment. It is not only limited to a particular age group or caste, it is dreaded by possibly all women big and small. Each day brings with itself a new case and a new report of a new woman being subjected to the sexual desires of a man known or unknown. In our country, men have peculiar tastes to let their frustrations out- even a 6 month old baby girl can satiate their thirst. Women who come from abroad to see the beauties of the country are very much shown the darkest sides of our futures. Sexual harassment can happen anywhere- on the streets during broad daylight when a group of men pass lewd comments about the women passing by or it can take place in the dark silent nights when women are groped, pulled into vehicles, raped, assaulted and then thrown away in the gutters to die. Men stare. They look at every possible body part a woman has and we as women are afraid to protect our own modesty. Sexual harassment happens even at workplace where a sudden change in the behavior of a colleague or even the boss for that matter brings about a very friendly and a very affectionate nature towards the employee. Passing sexist comments, objectifying women and forcing her into sex on pretext of promotion- they are widespread and so not acceptable. Such is the irony of our nation that even if a working woman has been promoted entirely on the basis of merit; some bigots openly talk about her sleeping with her boss to get a promotion. Just think about the plight of the poor woman who without any fault of hers is being pulled into the quagmire of humiliation.

"She does not ask for it". She doesn't. Being friendly or being kind and smiling doesn't make her wanting you to take her to your bedroom for the night. She deserves some respect. And we as a society are so helpful that if a woman is a victim, we are a constant reminder to her for her status. We make her realize that it is all her fault. We no longer accept her in the neighborhood and whisper past her without acknowledging her. What was her fault? Passing lewd comments against her modesty in public, following her without her consent, forcing her to undress, why is it the woman all the time?

2.8 Cyber Crimes

Another one of the widespread crimes against women. A very common crime against women which is a manifestation of the advancement in technology. Technology not always brings with itself progress. It does bring with itself its poisons as well. We don't even know that while we are busy updating our pictures and posts on social media or any other platform for that matter, someone is keeping an eye on all our moves. Videos are leaked; girls are blackmailed and even forced into physical relationships in exchange of prevention of outraging their modesty. Women are pulled into all sorts of heinous and outrageous acts. Cyber crimes are a very big

threat to every woman. You never will get to know who did it while the person is roaming around freely and enjoying the show.

“I used to get his messages on a daily basis. I knew who he was yet I couldn’t do anything to pull myself out of this. He used to send me demeaning texts and even pictures. He used to stalk me. Wherever I went, I could feel him following me. He even sent me my pictures doing something or the other. He somehow knew everything I was doing. I blocked him but unfortunately could not block him out of my life. he used to tag me in different and random posts to catch my attention. Frustrated, I spoke regarding this to one of my friends and to my shock, he was doing the same to her. He was doing this to every other girl”

- Anonymous

Situations like these are very common where men follow, stalk and humiliate women. When women refuse, they blackmail them. Some get killed and some kill themselves to escape the repercussions. Why doesn’t anyone do anything? Cyber bullying is a crime. But a crime cannot be punished till the time it is reported which terrified and shy women don’t do.

2.9 Health and Nutrition

Key findings and summary

1. Child vaccination and nutritional status

Girls are less likely to be fully immunized than boys and this differential is evident even when mothers’ education and household wealth are controlled for. Children’s likelihood of being fully immunized increases with mothers’ education; but girls benefit more than boys from having a mother who is highly educated.

Two out of five children age 0-35 months are underweight, with boys and girls about equally likely to be underweight. A higher proportion of children are underweight if their mother is employed than if she is not; however, this association is explained away by poverty which affects both underweight and women’s employment

2. Adult nutritional status

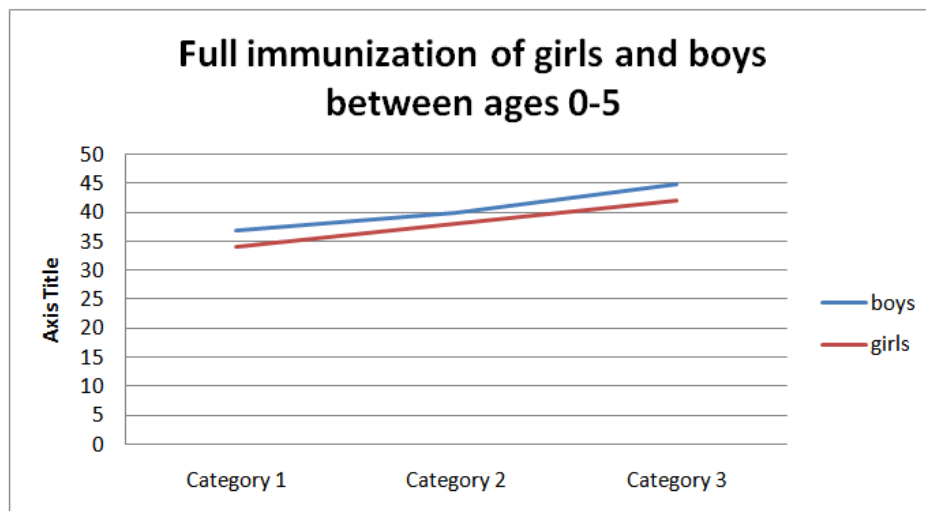
More than one in three women and men age 15-49 are too thin. Among couples, wives are more likely than husbands to be too thin

3. Modern contraceptive use among currently married women

Controlling for number of children ever born and other relevant factors, the likelihood of women using a modern contraceptive method is higher for women who are employed, particularly for cash, and for women who make decisions mainly about large household purchases; and lower for women who experience both spousal physical and sexual violence. Women are underrepresented in terms of health and nutrition as well. All these factors are majorly prevalent in the rural and the backward areas of the nation.

Girls are less likely to be immunized than boys because boys are seen as the sole bread earners of the family and ought to be fit and healthy to be able to do so. The diet of the girls is comparatively lower than that of the boys as they need “strength” to work.

This leads to less energy and lethargies in women for which they are demeaned.



The knowledge for contraceptives in the rural areas is very low due to lack of awareness and information. The women end up having diseases and unwanted pregnancy which leads to a prominent deterioration in their health status. This is one of the major problems which not only increases the population but also harms the woman to a great extent and impairs her ability to do work with her full capacity.

Failure to use contraceptives or a lack of knowledge about them, among young women is the biggest cause for abortions in India, with 80 per cent abortion stemming from contraceptive failure. In a study of 1,381 married and unmarried women in India pointed out the frequent lack of contraceptive usage among young women aged 15 to 24. Among those below 24 the percentage of such abortions is 79 per cent, those above 24 it goes to 82 per cent. The cycle ended where it began from. Girls end up with HIV AIDS which they contract from their respective partners but sadly, they are the ones who have to bear the consequences. No one blames the man for putting her through this. Men get married again to obtain their satisfaction and the women with HIV are treated as outcasts and boycotted from the society. Everything that happens has to be borne by the woman. She is the strongest and has the most deteriorated status in the society. And it goes on and will go on till the time we don't step up to intervene.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

This paper was formulated to understand the deep rooted problems faced by the women of our nation. The data was collected with the help of 2 diverse questionnaires formulated to analyze rural and the urban women and their contrasting conditions. The data was then analyzed and represented with the help of graphical depictions and tabular records.

2.1 Women in Rural Areas

Q1. Do you prefer a son over a girl child?



This pie chart shows that out of 10 people I questioned, 6 of them prefer a son over a girl child.

Q2. If yes, what is the reason behind it?



The reason for preference of a girl child is mainly considering her a burden. Requirement for labour is another major reason.

Q3. How many children do you have?



Most have 1 or 2 children

Q4. How many of them are girls?



Most of them have either none or one girl.

Q5. How old are they?



Q6. Do all of them go to school?



Out of the children, most families send their boys to school and not girls.

Q7. If the girls are made to drop out, what is the reason?



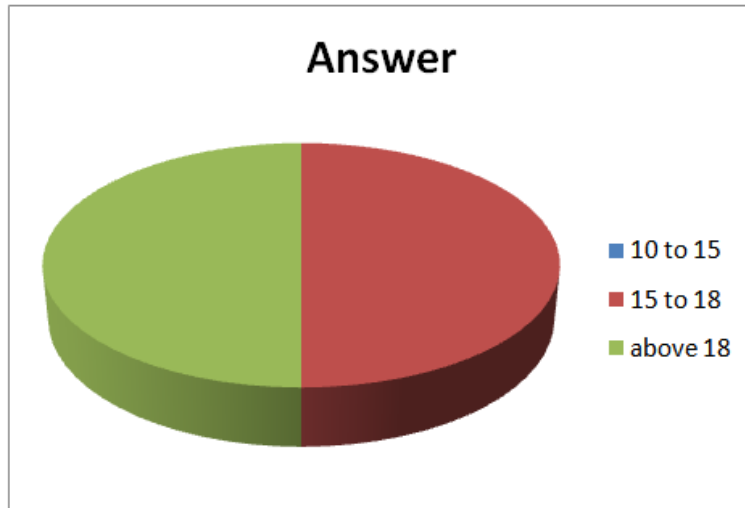
The major reason for dropping out of girls is socio economic reason mainly marriage.

Q8. Are any of the girls married?



Most of the girl children fortunately are not married.

Q9. If yes, at what age were they married?



Q10. At what age were you married?



Most of the mothers were married between ages 15 and 18 which also play a significant role in the marriageable age of the girls.

Q11. Do you work?



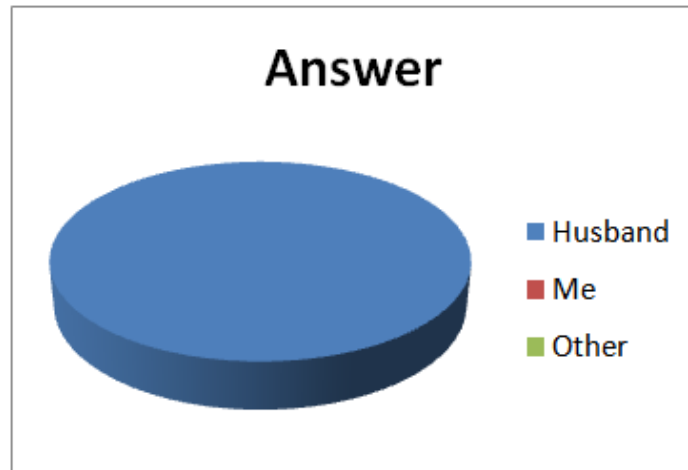
Most of the mothers work as a household maid to earn money.

Q12. Do you have a right on the income you earn?

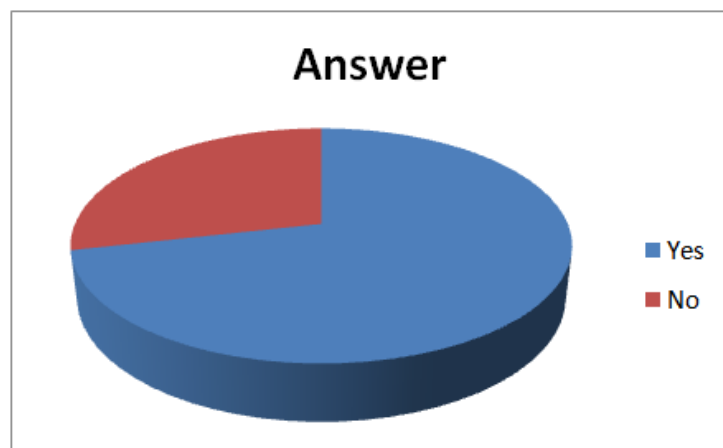


A clear indication that the woman doesn't have right on her income. Her husband takes it away from her and spends on his own needs.

Q13. Who is the head of the household?



Q14. Have you ever faced domestic violence?



Women are faced with domestic violence in a majority.

Q15. How often?



Q16. Are you aware there are laws against domestic violence?



Most of them are not aware and even if they are, they don't report it as it is their duty to obey husband they say.

Q17. Do you feel you and your girls are safe?



2.2 Knowing Our Urban Women

Q1. Are you a working woman?

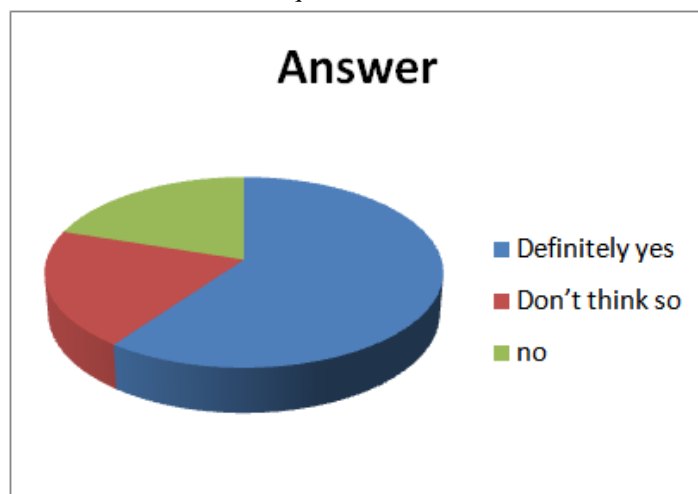


Q2. Have you ever been faced with gender based discrimination at your workplace?



A majority of them have difficulty in sharing the incidents.

Q3. Do you think that even in this era there is unequal or biased treatment for women?



There undoubtedly is gender based injustice prevalent in the society today.

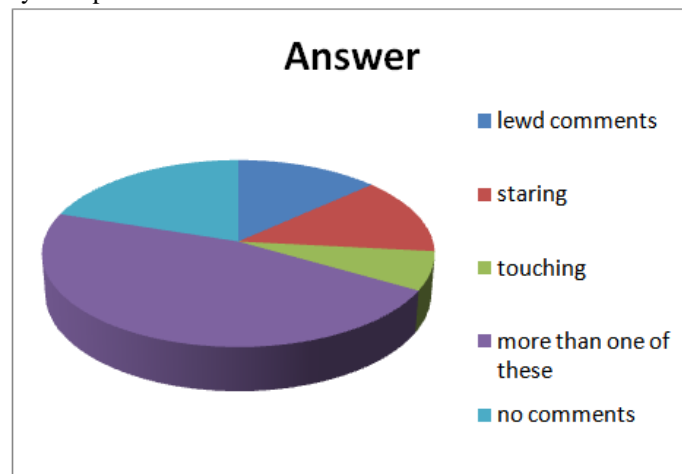
Q4. Do you think that even after laws being passed, are they being implemented effectively?



Q5. Have you ever felt sexually humiliated anywhere?



Q6. Which of these have you experienced?



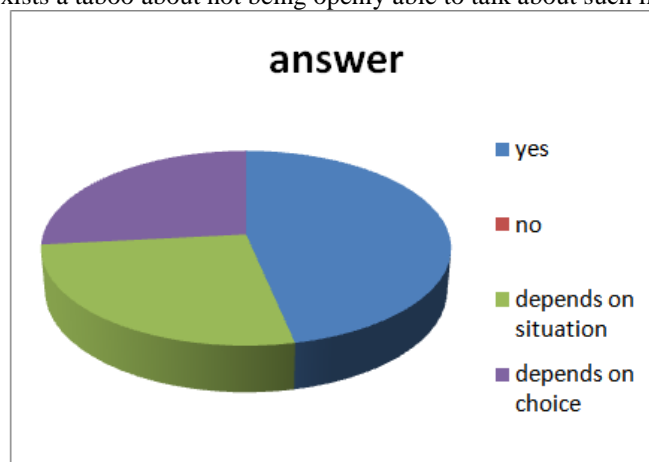
Such is the plight of our society where all kinds of humiliating acts are initiated.

Q7. Do you feel safe while travelling in public transport?



Not even the public transport is safe.

Q8. Do you think there exists a taboo about not being openly able to talk about such incidents?



There still is a hesitation among women to speak up and is also a matter of choice

IV. CONCLUSION

4.1 India has already long lost its fame due to the current scenario and the existing injustices faced by women in our nation and even the ones who visit us. Rural sections have been left behind though ironically even after being advanced; the urban areas haven't shown much of a better picture. It is a long way we have to go before the situation improves. Even though women are being aligned with the main stream these days, there still is a picture at the back of the minds of people that a woman stays a woman; fragile and weak.

After going through an extensive research and through my own experiences during the internship, I feel blessed on one hand and on the other feel ashamed and sad for the unfortunate. It is in the hands of the nation to bring about a change and we as citizens need to put a firm foot forward and realize that a holistic development is when the women are also treated like the way men are treated and preferred. Women can do wonders. She is not born weak; give her a chance and she can show how high she can leap. All she needs is a hand to hold and pull her out of her dark future. The situation is considerably improving but there is a long way to go still.

4.2 Suggestions

After studying and researching on the current happenings, I identified a major loophole; the way we are born and brought up and the things that have been fed to us by default which makes us feel differently about men and women. This needs to change. The parents need to realize that they themselves are creating demons in the minds of the children when at such a tender age they are being fed with orthodoxy and dogmatic teachings.

It will create a huge difference when our men start realizing this that it is the women who are driving the wheels of the world and without them, everything ceases to exist.

Awareness is another thing which is lacking in the people. They either are extremely ignorant with their eyes and eyes closed or they are not aware of their surroundings.

They lack sensitivity towards the slightest matters which makes them perpetrators. Not raising voices against the wrong aggravates and enhances the power and the audacity of the obnoxious devils roaming around freely in search of another prey.

The government initiatives and laws need to be even more ruthless and firm so that they think a million times before going for any such step.

Empowering the women is empowering the nation.

And this, can only happen when we come together as one.

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