



## DEVELOPING AWARENESS AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AGAINST GENDER RELATED CRIMES

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### Abstract

*Women's equal dignity and human rights as full human beings are enshrined in the basic instruments of today's international community. From the Charter of the United Nations' endorsement of the equal rights of men and women, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the subsequent international treaties and declarations, the rights of women are central to our vision of a democratic society. But the fine words of these documents and of the Vienna Declaration in 1993 and the declaration of Beijing in 1995 stand in sharp contrast to the daily reality of life for millions of women. Of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 per cent are women; the majority of the world's refugees are women; female illiteracy is invariably higher than male illiteracy. Women and girl-children are treated as commodities in cross-border prostitution rackets and the pornography industry. Millions of girls are still subject to genital mutilation, while women in every country are regular victims of domestic violence. In many countries, women lack access to reproductive health care and every day women are targeted in armed conflicts. Women's economic, social and cultural rights continue to be neglected.*

**Keywords :** Awareness, Pre-service Teachers and Gender Related Crimes.

Women's equal dignity and human rights as full human beings are enshrined in the basic instruments of today's international community. From the Charter of the United Nations' endorsement of the equal rights of men and women, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the subsequent international treaties and declarations, the rights of women are central to our vision of a democratic society. But the fine words of these documents and of the Vienna Declaration in 1993 and the declaration of Beijing in 1995 stand in sharp contrast to the daily reality of life for millions of women. Of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 per cent are women; the majority of the world's refugees are women; female illiteracy is invariably higher than male illiteracy. Women and girl-children are treated as commodities in cross-border prostitution rackets and the pornography industry. Millions of girls are still subject to genital mutilation, while women in every country are regular victims of domestic violence. In many countries, women lack access to reproductive health care and every day women are targeted in armed conflicts. Women's economic, social and cultural rights continue to be neglected.

**Need of Equal Rights for Women:** There can be no peace, security or sustainable economic development in societies which deny human rights, including the human rights of women. Fighting for women's human rights is a positive struggle which recognizes the quality of a woman's contribution in every aspect of the community: in politics, industry, commerce, education, academia, agriculture and the home. Women are also the true peacemakers and the peace-builders at the negotiating table and in war-torn communities everywhere. Practical and creative measures to realize the human rights of women - civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development should be a priority of the country and it should act with organizations, academic institutions, individuals and the

NGO community, but most specially with women throughout the country to promote and protect women's rights and to translate these rights into a better quality of life. The principle of the equal rights of women and men was recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, and is contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all subsequent major international human rights instruments. Confirmation of the principle of equality in these instruments was an important step in the recognition of the rights of women. Yet traditional exclusion of women from the public domain has persisted in our country - relegating women to the private domain. The need for women's participation in all spheres of society – in both the public and the private domains – and the recognition of inequality and discrimination in the private domain, led to the creation of specific standards for the protection of women's rights. In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW establishes women's right to non-discrimination on the basis of sex, and affirms equality in international law. It provides that women and men are entitled to the equal enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in civil, cultural, economic, political and social fields. Different global conferences promoted the review of policies and programmes from the perspective of their impact on women and men - in other words, a re-evaluation of policies and programmes from a gender perspective. Aim is to achieve the advancement of women through correcting disparities in different policy sectors and ensuring their enjoyment of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The Human Rights of women and the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life,



at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community. Recent world conferences, including Vienna (1993), Cairo (1994) and Beijing (1995) have confirmed the strong link between the gendered nature of violations of human rights, and the actual advancement of women's rights. Discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity. It is also an obstacle to the participation of women on equal terms with men in all spheres of society.

**Unequal Status of Women:** Countries' achievements in human development (that is, whether people are educated, enjoy a decent standard of living and lead long and healthy lives) change noticeably when inequality in achievement between women and men is taken into account. The majority of the world's 1.3 billion people living in poverty are women, a situation caused by a number of factors. Their unequal situation relates to access to land, property, credit and other economic resources, is one aspect. Another is their treatment under social welfare systems and their status and power in the family. Research has shown that, although gender inequality is strongly associated with human poverty, it is not necessarily associated with income poverty. Even when a country is very poor in terms of income poverty, it can still achieve a relative level of gender equality according to basic indicators for human development. Progress in gender equality can be achieved at different income levels and stages of development. And it can be found across a range of cultures and political ideologies. Access to, and control of, productive resources, particularly land, are key factors in addressing women's poverty. In rural areas, lack of access to, and control of, productive resources have particular consequences for women. Although women's right to own land is often legally established, gender asymmetry in access to and control over land is one of the main obstacles to the full participation of women in rural development. Because of continuing exclusion of women from, and discrimination against women in, acquiring land, security of tenure and inheritance rights to land and property, women also face particular constraints in securing and maintaining their right to housing. The continued discrimination women face in all matters relating to land and property has been identified as the single most critical factor in the perpetuation of gender inequality and poverty.

**Education & Women:** Education is also a prerequisite for effective economic participation. Education and training for women and girls yields high social and economic returns, and is a precondition for the empowerment of women. While enrolment ratios for boys and girls at the primary level are approaching equality everywhere, differences persist at the regional level and for different age groups and levels

of schooling, especially at higher levels. Two thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women, with illiteracy highest among older women who never had the opportunity to go to school.

**Discrimination with Women at Workplace:** Women work in different jobs and occupations than men, almost always with lower status and pay. In the enjoyment of rights, women face constraints and vulnerabilities which differ from those that affect men and which are of significant relevance to the enjoyment of these rights. At the same time, these variables mean that women may be affected by violations of rights in ways that are different from men. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty and social marginalization. Women suffer systemic and systematic discrimination, which results in deep patterns of inequality and disadvantage. The overall level of development and of resources available to countries, women's literacy levels and women's access to information and to legal remedies also have an impact on women's enjoyment of their rights. The gender-based division of labour, with women being primarily responsible for reproductive work and work related to the family, and men for productive work, also contributes to the perpetuation of gender-based inequalities. Many women experience multiple barriers in gaining access to rights such as employment, housing, land, food and social security. These barriers include the disproportionate burden of reproductive and care-giving work performed by women; the sexual division of labour and segregated employment practices; discriminatory traditional and cultural laws and practices; unequal representation by women in political and other decision-making structures at all levels; and the widespread violence perpetrated against women. Women's social position, marital status, class, or membership in particularly vulnerable groups, such as refugee or migrant women, rural or urban poor women, are often linked to de facto, and sometimes also to de jure, discrimination.

**Traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl-child:** The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 expanded the scope of the international programme on human rights, emphasizing that "gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, including those resulting from cultural prejudice and international trafficking, are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be eliminated". The Conference urged Governments to take steps to combat harmful traditional or customary practices, including female infanticide.

The Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995 deal with harmful traditional practices. It defines violence against women as encompassing dowry-related violence, female



genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection. The reasons why men outnumber women in certain parts of the world include harmful attitudes and practices such as female genital mutilation, son preference (which results in female infanticide and prenatal sex selection), early marriage, including child marriage, honour killings and discrimination against girls in food allocation.

**Problem of Health & Reproduction:** The Beijing Conference states: Good health is essential to leading a productive and fulfilling life, and the right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, is basic to their empowerment. The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Bearing in mind that women are particularly vulnerable in times of internal or international armed conflicts, States parties must take special measures to protect women from rape, abduction and other forms of gender-based violence. In the recent past the Committee has devoted increasing attention to the problem of trafficking of women and children and forced prostitution. It also implies that women may not be treated as objects to be given together with the property of the deceased husband to his family". As the publication and dissemination of obscene and pornographic material portraying women as objects of violence is likely to promote such treatment, Nations are called upon to provide information about legal measures to restrict the publication or dissemination of such material. The right to marriage, which is the subject of General Comment No. 19 (1990), entails equality of men and women to enter marriage only with their free and full consent. Moreover, the commission of so-called "honour crimes", which remain unpunished, constitutes a serious violation of the constitution Laws which impose more severe penalties on women than on men for adultery or other offences also violate the requirement of equal treatment. Indian Constitution has been very liberal about rights of women. Women have right of education and of equal pay for equal work. They have legal right of equal share in the property of father. They have right to marry a man of their choice and can complain against domestic violence and issues related with demand of dowry. They can also complain against ill-treatment at work places. Female foeticide is a crime so is pornography, rape and honour killing. Child marriage and Satipratha are also crimes in the eyes of law. Despite having so lofty laws, many women are sacrificed at the altar of dowry, men-women ratio has been disturbed because of female foeticide. A girl child is discriminated in education and nutrition.

Women suffer sexual harassment at workplace. All this happens because women are not sensitized about their rights. Education should play a key role in sensitizing women about their rights and making them independent.

**Rationale of the Study:** Women constitute not only half of the population. Their role is even bigger and more magnanimous as they are creators and have the power to give birth to a new human being. A nation cannot develop until women play an active role in social reform. It is rightly said that the society which does not pay respect to women is sure to perish. In India traditionally a great respect is given to women. Nari tum kewal shradha ho, Ek nahin do do matrayen ,Nar se badh kar nari these lines of poems describe the high status of women but reality is quite different as India is recognized as the most unsafe country for women. In the patriarchal society of India many evil social customs like sati pratha, bal vivah, parda pratha ,dowry system, female foeticide, crime against women developed. There are crimes like dowry, burning of brides at the altar of dowry, killing of girl child at the womb of mothers, discriminating girl child, molestation of women at workplace, in travel and even at education centres is really very disturbing for emotionally sensitive minds. Recent cases of rape of even minors pose a serious question about mental health of the society. Killing of innocent, harmless girl child at the womb of mother demonstrate the callousness and hard-heartedness of an insensitive society. The researcher tried to make the pre-service teachers aware about these issues so that they can mould the society positively by influencing their students to create a conducive climate for girls.

**Objectives:** To know awareness among pre-service teachers against gender related crimes, To know sensitivity among pre-service teachers against gender related crimes through focused group discussion, To develop a programme to create awareness among pre-service teachers against gender related Crimes, To make the pre-service teachers aware about the reasons of gender related crimes, To make the pre-service teachers aware about the solutions of gender related crimes, To make the pre-service teachers learn about precautionary measures, To make the pre-service teachers learn about the legal provisions against gender related crimes , To evaluate awareness among pre-service teachers against gender related crimes after implementing the programme and To study the feedback of pre-service teachers about the programme.

**Research Questions:** What are main gender related crimes? What are the reasons of gender related crimes? What are the solutions of these crimes? What are the precautionary measures to protect themselves in difficult situations? What are the legal provisions against these crimes?

**Research Design:** This was an experimental research. This was a single group pre-test and post-test design. As gender



sensitivity of pre-service teachers was evaluated before implementing the programme and after its implementation. All Pre-service teachers of Anand District comprised the population of the study. Eighty pre-service teachers of the Waymade College of Education were selected as sample. This was purposive sampling as the Waymade College of Education being the English Medium College, students from all over the country, even outside from Gujarat and from diverse background join the college. The college also has a Women Development Cell which works for women empowerment. The tools used were Pre-test to know awareness of pre-service teachers regarding gender related crimes, Post-test: To know effect of the programme on pre-service teachers regarding gender related crimes, and Feedback Form: The researcher prepared the feedback form to study the awareness of pre-service teachers about the programme.

**Research Procedure:** The researcher took the pre-test and post-test as well as thirteen sessions of one hour each. In all fifteen sessions of one hour each were conducted by the researcher. On Day 1: Pre-test on: To know the awareness of Pre-service teachers about gender related crimes, a pre-test was taken so that there awareness about the same can be known. On Day 2: There was focussed group discussion about gender related crimes in which the pre-service teachers shared their experiences. They told about various crimes which happen every day in India and people need to be aware of these stark realities. On day 3: Talk by the resource person MS. Sapna Rathi an army major, she talked about the picture of gender related crimes all over the world. She talked about the horrible crime of acid attack as well as Domestic Violence Act 2005, Rape Law 2013. On day 4: Visit of Karate Team A Karate team visited to train the girls in self-defence. The purpose of this demonstration was to demonstrate that by learning these tricks they can easily overpower the assailants and not become victims of such crimes. On day 5: Pre-service teachers were asked to think of reasons for the different gender-related crimes. On day 6: Pre-service teachers listed the reasons of various crimes and wrote them on strips. On day 7: After discussion about reasons of such type of crimes, Pre-service teachers came out with a list of severe crimes and prepared the scrap books having different themes. On day 8: Pre-service teachers were asked to think of solutions of the gender related crimes. Discuss about the solutions of these type of crimes and write and paste the same on scrap books took place. On day 9: Pre-service teachers navigated the INTERNET to find the legal provisions against these gender related crimes. On day 10: Demonstration by 108 to use it in case of emergency on January 25, 2014. The purpose of this demonstration was to show how this can be used when any woman suffers due to violence or sexual assault. As this service enables a person to get first aid and medical treatment,

this helps the woman in danger get advantage of medical facilities. Many times this timely service can save the lives of innocent victims. On day 11: Discussion about the legal provisions for different types of crimes. Pre-service teachers were informed about legal provisions against domestic violence, dowry death, female foeticide, forced prostitution and honour killing. The main purpose for this was to make the girls aware of their rights. How can they avail of government and police help in case of harassment. On day 12: Pre-service teachers were asked to read important portions of the book 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' by Khaled Houseni as this book vividly describes gender related crimes. On day 13: Review of the book 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' by Khaled Houseni. Purpose of this review was to critically evaluate the conditions of women under Taliban. On day 14: Focus group discussion about various gender related crimes and need to face them courageously. On day 15: Post test and feedback on . A post test was given to Pre-service teachers to know the effect of the programme on their understanding various gender related crimes and how they can face such situations bravely and also seek government help.

**Findings:** Analysis of feedback and analysis of pre-test and post-test yielded the following results: Most of the pre-service teachers agreed that the programme developed their insights about crimes against women. Most of them stated that the programme provided them information about gender related crimes. They came to know about the use of 108 in case of emergency. Most of them stated that they came to know about the reasons and solutions of gender related crimes. They came to know about the self-defence skills as watched the demonstration of the Karate team. Thus most of the pre-service teachers stated that the programme made them more aware about gender related crimes.

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