

Gender Based Violence & Conflict

Understanding Women's Struggles in India



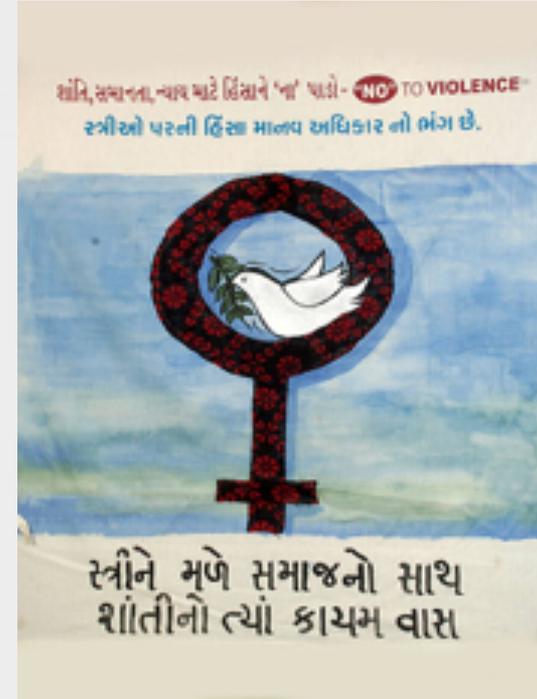
Background

Domestic violence, sexual assault, street harassment (e.g. Gopi-teasing, eve-teasing), sex-selective abortion, femicide (dowry-death, bride-burning, honor-killing), forced marriage, child marriage, and sterilization are all forms of gender-based violence occurring across the Indian subcontinent.

Examples of Feminist Posters in India



Title: "Report domestic violence"
Publisher: Vadodara: Sahiyar



Title: "If the society supports women, there will be more peace"
Publisher: Vadodara: Sahiyar

Definitions

Domestic violence: An ongoing pattern of behavior in a relationship where one person exerts power and control over another.

Sexual Assault: Engaging in sexual contact or activity with someone who has not given their consent (a clear and freely given “yes”).

Street Harassment: Street harassment is any action or comment between strangers in public places that is disrespectful, unwelcome, threatening and/or harassing and is motivated by gender or sexual orientation. In countries like India and Bangladesh, it’s termed “eve teasing,” and in countries like Egypt, it’s called “public sexual harassment.”

Definitions

Dowry Death: A woman is killed or tortured to suicide for failing to meet her husband and in-laws' demands for higher dowry payments.

Honor Killing: A form of violence against women committed with the motive of protecting or regaining the honor of the perpetrator, family, or community. Victims are targeted because their actual or perceived behavior is deemed to be shameful or to violate cultural or religious norms. Conduct such as resisting an arranged marriage, seeking a divorce, adopting a Western lifestyle and wearing Western clothing, and having friends of the opposite sex have resulted in honor violence.

Statistical Overview

- 47% of women aged 20-24 were illegally married before age 18.
- Between 2006-2009, there were 60 reported honor killings in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu alone.
- 8,093 dowry murders across the country were recorded in 2007 alone.
- Rape is the fastest growing crime in India with a 733% increase in reported cases since 1971.
- A total of 75,930 domestic violence cases were reported in the country in 2007 with an increase of 20.3% over 2006 and 35.8% over the average of the previous 5 years (2002–2006). The conviction rate for these charges was only 20.9%.

Assignment

What does a non-violent society look like?

Choose two definitions from the examples given of gender-based violence. Research two international organizations that are helping to combat these specific forms of violence. What is their mission? What accomplishments have they made? Write a two-page summary of your organizations' specific methods to combat gender-based violence.

For more information please visit the South Asian Feminist Activism Archive at:
<http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/GenderStudies>

Thank you!