

# LAVANYAM

VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE

DELHI UNIVERSITY



POEMS & ARTICLES

ON

ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN



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# MESSAGE

From

NSS programme officer

Every year, 25th November is celebrated as the International Day for elimination of violence against women. The purpose of this day is to stop violence against women and to spread awareness about it. 25th November is celebrated all over the world, but only by celebrating this day, our work is not accomplished. Do we know that today, women are victims of violence not only in India but all over the world? Both society and families are to be blamed for the problems faced by women. Despite being literate, women suffer atrocities. Today, women are challenging men in every field and have achieved remarkable feats. However, it is difficult to change the mindset of men. Men are persistently torturing women in many forms. Why do women face these problems with a smile on their faces? The reason is a lack of awareness about their rights, concern about family prestige, and culture of the society.

It is a matter of great pride and pleasure that our NSS volunteers are trying to spread awareness about the rights of women through their articles, poems, and speeches with the spirit of service, enthusiasm, and cooperation. I congratulate the entire team of NSS for working tirelessly and successfully bringing out this e- magazine on the theme of "Elimination of Violence against Women." I wish all the very best to all the NSS members. My wish is that they should continue to develop the spirit of service in bringing out a positive change in the society at a larger scale.

*Dr. Sandhaya Jain*

## MESSAGE

From  
NSS society president  
(Vivekananda college)

Firstly I would like to congratulate the editorial team and contributors for the release of LAVANYAM and I am looking forward to know the perspectives of our volunteers which they have woven into their words. This is a baby step towards making our very own world a better place to live in. Heartiest Thanks to all the volunteers and teachers for your unnerving support.

*Yamini*

## MESSAGE

From  
NSS society vice president  
(Vivekananda college)

The "LAVANYAM" is not just a magazine, it is hard work of all the NSS Volunteers. It contains the collection of poetries and articles related to the condition of women in the society and yes, it is written by our own Volunteers.

*Tannu Shrivastava*

## MESSAGE

From  
NSS society treasurer  
(Vivekananda college)

LAVANYAM reflects that the society needs to change its mentality. After so many years of Independence; we girls don't get that freedom and equality which we want. All of us have faced some kind of discrimination or violence at some stage of our life and LAVANYAM tells about that, every girl or woman can relate herself with its content.

*Prithika Rastogi*

## Introduction

We welcome you to the maiden issue of our magazine , " Lavanyam " , the symbol of resistance and elimination of violence against women .

NSS conducted a 15 days event from 26th Nov to 10th Dec on "International Day For The Elimination Of Violence Against Women", and this magazine , where our amazing girls provided their insights about the same , is its final fruit.

This magazine might be insignificant on the path of struggle against the fight for this huge injustice and violence , but as they say , little drops do make an ocean . We do wish and hope that any part of this initiative does rise a spark in anybody anywhere.

Regards  
NSS unit  
Vivekananda college  
Delhi University

# Mother's Arc

-Atlanta

B.A. History (H)

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The demise of Lucretia as Lucrece  
Her anguish masqueraded in Shakespearean rhapsody;  
Women wrath in women's woe  
The rape of Lucretia, the rape of Lucrece.  
The suicide of Lucretia, the suicide of Lucrece.  
Women wreaths in women's war.  
Men idealized her melancholy in romantic ballads,  
Men stained her misery in canvases of fantasy.

Poseidon's poison withered the beautiful Medusa  
A seraphic visage now succumbed to Athena's curse;  
Women wail in women's wrong  
Gorgon buried in a man's wicked malign.  
Gorgon buried in a maiden's shrine.  
Women weep in women's wealth  
Rape, curse, death – punishments afforded only to women

I'm Sita, I sojourn in my women's melody  
I dwelled in Draupadi, I am Ahalya's plea,  
Women wander in women's wealth  
Mother's sons, all glorious men, torment me.  
Mother's sons ask for my ordeal in fire,  
I burn and you accept my honored fidelity.  
Kings in coronets bereft me, gods in garland wrecked in bigotry,  
And husbands enslaved me in rolling dice.

My women bleed in your sinister realm  
My women defy your felony  
Women worshipped as goddesses  
Women of battles women rioting against  
schism  
Your deities are women, holy words profound,  
I am honored in your prayers yet in my bloodshed you are crowned.

# *Just Another Day*

---

-Akshita Verma  
BA(H) A. Psychology

It might as well be just another day.  
Diurnal streets of hustle, perilous alleys of dark  
are where my feet stroll – day in and day out.  
Day out, lights out, macabre essence of  
gazes crawling my skin, all parts of the same puzzle.  
I rush, I quicken my pace, my bag slipping out of my clammy hands;  
Trembling feet briskly make their way across the cool sands.  
All efforts cease, when cars slow down, windows roll down;  
Shush, my heart, you're not supposed to make a sound.  
I keep my eyes evasive, staring straight ahead; an eye contact may cost me more  
than just daylight.  
Their eyes turn elusive, but their leers don't.  
No, they invade my thoughts, my dreams;  
make me feel impure.  
Hottest of gazes that turn so cold; chill my veins, numb my wits  
Forcing my feet to dawdle, when each step feels like moving a boulder,  
I turn the corners, change my routes, so they'll stop.  
“Stop, please!”, my heart screams; I force the hop  
in my step and the sound withers away in my being.  
My feet slip... reminds me of the pavement, hurries me to escape;  
I let out a sigh of relief upon seeing my familiar cave.  
Shakily, I climb the steps up to my place,  
drop my keys twice before trembling fingers unlock my safe haven.  
Taking a deep breath, I relax and console myself that it's all over;  
when the dread creeps up on me, slits my brain and opens the floodgates of fear.  
For tomorrow will also be just another day,  
and I might not be as safe then as I am today.

# *The Murders*

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-Shruti Sinha  
B.A. (H) History

There's a little room in the place I live,  
Dark, equipped with ways to kill  
I slowly twist the knob and venture inside, as  
my vision begins to wane.  
I follow the faint whimpering that comes from directions,  
And I find myself in a gruesome bloodbath

Taunts, judgments and stereotypes lying everywhere,  
Individuality and ambition moan achingly,  
They look at me with pleading eyes,  
As they breathe their last,  
Their eyes go lifeless and the room goes eerily quiet.  
Suddenly the door opens, and  
Patriarchy walks in,  
With the loud voices of individuality and reason  
I shudder and hide amongst imprisoned originality, crushed dreams and  
strangled identities.  
A ripple of rebellion in the other group,  
and with a look patriarchy signals its minions to crush it  
I close my eyes, as it kills more of the captives ruthlessly,  
As their screams ring through the entire room.  
With a satisfied smirk, they walk inwards and disappear in the darkness.  
I see an opportunity and run out, shutting the door behind me  
I know they're out there,  
Breathing heavily, I vow to never let them get to me.



# *She can't give up*

---

Yamini  
B.A. (H) History

When I look at her, she looks happy  
with all the charm in her smile  
The pain beneath that smile says,  
“See, I’m okay, I have no choice”

She is fine, she tells herself  
Having to bear the pain daily in her life  
Dying inside slowly, the tired soul in her body says  
Fight, fight, until the end as  
You are a woman, and women don’t give up

She suffered a lot, her life taking her for granted  
the circumstances so abusive, a life so torturous  
A lot of times, she thought of leaving it all behind  
Going where at least she’d have some peace, some serenity  
But that, that one voice says it all  
Stops her every now and then, that one voice is to be blamed  
for that one voice, reminds her of the days  
The days when she used to smile

The days when she used to have a voice of her own  
When she used to have her own choices  
Now, no matter what she does  
She isn’t living, she is long lost

Just the moment, when she thinks of leaving the world  
That, that one little voice comes in between and reminds her  
Fight, you’ll have to fight as

You are a woman, and women just never give

# *A Night to Remember*

---

-Ishita Mishra  
B.Com (H)

She is being followed.  
She could plainly hear those men  
mumbling, sniggering and whistling at  
her. Her heart misses a beat.  
She tries to check again  
if she has got a pepper spray.  
She hasn't.  
How could she forget carrying it?  
She curses herself.  
Her heart and brain ponder.  
Should she run?  
Or turn around and confront them  
with all the valour she has?  
They are still following her.  
It's a cold, dark and new moon night.  
No traces of light could be seen nearby.  
How badly she curses herself again;  
for taking that road to her home.  
She shouldn't have, she thinks.

The men have increased their pace  
and are now walking steadily towards her.  
She tries to walk more swiftly,  
scared,  
almost running.  
She is half-conscious now.  
Lying on a bed of rocks,  
looking carefully at the sky above her.  
Contemplating,  
what actually was her mistake?

Her eyes,  
eyes that were full of dreams and  
aspirations,  
now, bleeding,  
are somehow stuck  
on the vast patch of sky,  
glinting with stars.

Stars,  
that have witnessed everything  
that had taken place  
a while ago.  
Her beautiful white kurta has turned red.  
Soaked in blood.  
Her blood.  
She is still half-conscious,  
groaning in pain.  
Pain caused by all those things that had been pushed  
up  
inside her,  
tearing her thighs and her soul apart. Forcefully.  
Why were pieces of glass introduced to her genitals  
though?  
Wasn't man power enough?  
Maybe it wasn't.  
She wonders.  
OH, how badly she wants to die now!

The intensity of the pain is increasing.  
Pain of not carrying a knife with her that night.  
Pain of taking a relatively deserted road.  
Pain of fighting back with all the courage but still not  
winning the battle.  
Pain of taking birth as a girl.

She is closing her eyes now.  
Her mind is full of questions that she is going to lash  
out at God once she bids goodbye to this world.

But,  
Would God be able to justify all her thoughts and  
questions?  
Would God be able to justify the bestial nature of  
humans  
that she had just witnessed;  
that most of the girls encounter every day?  
Would God even have the guts to face the soul that  
may come up any minute now,  
to challenge Him?  
God knows.  
She thinks; She sighs;  
and shuts her eyes for eternity.

# *Yes, it Happened to #MeToo*

---

-Shruti Sinha  
B.A. (H) History

At workplaces,  
While I worked on presentations,  
In front of corporate scavengers leering at me  
in the archives room, and in the canteen.  
Yes, it happened to me too.

The classroom quiet and empty, as I copied the last line from the blackboard,  
In the innocence of the school uniform,  
Yes, it happened to me too.

In the security of my own home,  
fooled by my once fatherly figure,  
While I drew a card for him  
Yes, it happened to me too.

In the cold interview room,  
Eager to finally start working,  
Scarred by the lasciviousness disguised as professionalism.  
Yes, it happened to me too.

I'm the world-famous actor, living in this glamorous world, I once was a novice,  
In all those auditions, years ago.  
The violation I suffered, and something broke inside me.  
Yes, it happened to me too.

Don't ask me why I waited, don't ask me what took so long, and  
don't ask me if I'm seeking attention.  
No, I don't want attention, I want justice,  
no, I won't smile for you.  
And no, it wasn't fine. Neither then, nor now.  
Fight for a world  
Where women no longer have to step forward  
and announce to a broken community that  
"Yes, it happened to #Me too!

# ***SHE!***

---

-Ritu Rawat  
B.Com (H)

My question to everyone,  
Why does this happen only with one.  
Why everyone's sorrows are hers, why  
doesn't she let them have theirs?  
Does selfishness not exist for her?  
Why do we all forget that she brings us here?  
Why don't we set this up?  
That even her smell is no less than  
I 'won't give up.'  
Why do we all demand for justice  
when we already failed to notice?  
We just light candles to do her a favour  
Can these candles feel that abominable incident faced by her?  
Is this the only reward,  
For which she has parted away from us.  
I have many questions to ask,  
But I know, no one has the guts to put away the mask.

# ***Who Am I!***

---

-Rashi Jain  
BA (H) A. Psychology

I became an object for you,  
a way to let out your frustration.  
Not a wife, not a life partner  
but an object, just an object!

What did I do that made me any less than you?  
What did I do that made me serve you?  
My ability to tolerate  
That my Momma taught me! or,  
My inability to fight back,  
That society taught me!

# *The Divine Soul*

---

-Ekta Bhatt  
B. Com(H)

She was born superlative  
And she called that place her native  
She grew up fierce and bold  
But her opinions did not hold  
She was expected to be timid  
Always got reminded of her limits  
She was asked to remain quiet  
And told to always follow a strict diet.  
The unachievable body standards  
She was asked to achieve  
Was also their conspiracy for  
Sexualizing her body and,  
compromising her needs.  
She was still determined to prove them all wrong  
and was firm to take back which is hers to belong.  
Yes, she is undeniably the divine soul  
Whom no one should try to control

She continued walking on the thorns,  
Even when she knew the uphill battle was yet to come.  
She was bullied, she was oppressed  
She was judged, she was tortured  
For being different, for wanting a revolution  
And was constantly told that the world she wants  
Is only an illusion.  
She learned and she failed  
She endeavored, and she was hailed by  
the same chauvinistic people  
By whom her disparagement was declared.  
She still has a long way to go  
But she gave everyone else a hope for the afterglow.

Yes, she is undeniably the divine soul  
Whom no one should try to control

# *Am I a Puppet!?*

-Tannu  
History (H)

I am the sky, I am the earth  
I am the moon and I am the sun  
Who are you to judge me all?  
Dammed! I am the girl who endured the rape.  
Why do I shut my mouth?  
Why do I stay silent?  
I am not wrong – he is the rapist,  
Why don't you all try to understand!  
I have seen the dark room,  
I have felt the bad touch.  
A devil comes towards me,  
And always sells my self-respect.  
Don't you dare to stop me  
Because I will not!

Where was your so-called voice  
When I was being raped?  
I have seen my bloody body;  
I have seen my torn clothes.  
The nail mark of the rapist,  
Still hurts me everywhere.  
The mark of red on shoulders,  
The stitches on my breast...  
How can someone be so cruel?  
Am I a puppet?  
Tell me, am I a puppet for you all?  
Or a doll with whom you want to  
play, Use and throw me away?  
Listen, I am in pain,  
But I am not weak.  
I know there are so many stitches,  
Yet I will fight.  
And fight on!

# *The Silence of the Storm.*

---

-Divyanshi  
B.A. Programme

The tender winds,

The sprouting buds,

Now have the ferocity of a storm.  
Have now grown thorns.

The beauty,

Is now taking her true form.

You caged her,

Stopped her from being her own.

Beat her down to nothing,

With hateful words.

She is a white bird,

Not stained by the blue of sky or sea.

She will fly away,

Leaving you to cry on your misery.

She is beautiful soul,

Wanted by all.

But she possesses a  
storm,

To make you fall.

She is like the sun and moon,

Luminous and dangerous,  
someone you only wish to hold.

She is made of light and darkness;

She is the dazzle of heaven and Satan's misery.

## *Girl With Wings*

---

-Vidhi Bhardwaj  
B.A. (H) Sanskrit

If I say I'm fine

it doesn't mean that

you have the right

to mess with my mood

If I say I don't care

it doesn't mean that

you can hurt me

whenever you want

If I say yes, I like you

it doesn't mean that

I'm ready to love you

If I say yes

I'm waiting for you

it doesn't mean that

I can't live without you

I can live without you

Whenever you let me down,

I'll show you that I can

fly harder again and again

so don't even dare

think that you can break me easily.

# *To All Men!*

---

-Qurat ul ain  
History (H)

## To all the men claiming "Not all men"

Sorry but it's hard for us to believe you.  
We don't believe you when you say  
"Not all men are potential rapists "  
Because we can't say to you,  
"Not all women are potentials to get raped"  
We don't believe you when you say  
"Not all men are potential molesters"  
Because we can't tell you  
"Not all women are potentials to be molested"  
Because enough of your victim blame game!  
Coz that 8-month-old girl sleeping in her cot  
Didn't even know what that means!  
Or that 8-year-old innocent girl would have thought  
How kind people are oh my Lord!  
When that neighbor uncle gave her, her favorite lollipop...  
Or that 16-year-old, at the threshold of puberty,  
Her emotions and hormones were on a roll  
but she still valued and cared for her modesty.  
Or that 40-year-old woman, she was worried about protecting her daughter  
When that beast shredded her humility  
And didn't hesitate to be a butcher.  
Or do you still want me to talk about that 90-year-old woman lazily sitting in the sun  
and narrating the stories of valiant gentlemen to her grandson.  
So don't get offended next time we say  
"Any man"  
Because we still aren't safe enough to say  
"No man"!



# Be *the* Change

— Simran Trehan

In our country in earlier times, women and girls were denied basic respect and dignity. People used to treat them as a burden on the family and the country and girls were usually married off early in life and sent to their marital home where they were supposed to do household work and endure everything quietly. They were expected to remain silent even if they faced verbal or physical violence regularly.

But things have changed gradually over the years, and the Indian Constitution provides equal rights to women. Several policies and laws have ensured an equal status for women. Although our country still has a long way to go to ensure gender parity, increasingly, more and more girls are following their dreams and aspirations and also learning to raise their voice against injustice and abuse. As per data women are found to be performing better than men in many fields like education, research and leadership and have constantly proven their intelligence and potential.

The United Nations General Assembly has designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. As per available statistics, in India one woman is raped every 20 minutes, and by no means can one say that girls are safe in our country. Women everywhere, especially in rural areas, are compelled to keep quiet about the abuse inflicted on them as it is seen as bringing dishonour to the family of the girl. However, compared to the the reporting of such horrific incidents in the past, more women are coming forward to report them now.

Incidents of reported incest rape have increased over the years; rape accounts for a substantial percentage of reported cases of violence against women.

This is something that has to stop.

Some of the forms of violence perpetrated upon women are: rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, acid attack, reproductive coercion, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection, obstetric violence, online gender-based violence and mob violence, and many more. Rather than showing a downward trend, modernization seems to lead to an increase in the number of cases of violence. Every day in the news we hear instances of rape, sexual harassment, and other forms of abuse against women. This is not to say that the government or the legal system does not try to eliminate or minimize such instances, however, their efforts have proved to be insufficient and a social movement also needs to be initiated to change the mind-set of people. Strict action needs to be taken to bring it down to zero. Marching with a candle in one's hands on the roads does not give the victimized girls who have faced heinous crimes any solace or peace. But for society to feel that justice has been done, the culprit needs to be punished. The culprit must feel similar pain which they have inflicted on others. In our country, only a small fraction of cases of violence against women are settled where the culprit is punished; in a large number of them the accused walks free due to lack of evidence or some other reason.

In my personal opinion, women have to continue to fight this violence. "Hey girls and women! We are not free in our country till there are zero cases of abuse. So be your own boss and remember who you are... Don't be afraid of the world... Be the Change!"

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST *women* IN INDIA

-Nancy Sharma

Domestic violence has often been studied as an abusive expression triggered by financial stress, mental stress, fear and of course, systemic patriarchy, that has furthered the cases of financial abuse, and at times, even murder. The national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has reported more than 50% rise in domestic violence.

The sense of isolation and financial and medical anxiety coming along with the deadly pandemic and sinking economy have increased the frequency of incidents of terror within homes and most certainly challenged the concept of 'escape' for the victims. Workplaces, school, etc. sans the abusers at home have been different mediums of escape for women and children; and during the lockdown these don't exist anymore.

With spaces of temporary escape fading out from the lives of the victims, fear and a sense of impending threat has been amplified during the lockdown and restricted movement. In many scenarios, the abusers have been found to use the pandemic as a pretext to restrict the victims at home, to threaten withdrawing financial support if the victim is dependent on them, not paying medical attention if the victim shows symptoms of the virus, and abuse of alcohol and drugs as an excuse to cope with the ongoing stress. Disguised in forms of sexist dialogues and jokes, subtle elements of stalking culture in mainstream media, degrading terms used for women in general, etc. Instead of focusing on all kinds of toxic behaviour that can be found on the misogynistic spectrum, most of the attention is usually paid to an offense that looks more sensational; and a one-dimensional corrective measure for it may not hold the promise of systemic change.

Moreover the power dynamics between a dominating and a dominated gender that usually accelerates toxic masculinity always justifies the oppression of the latter. The number of crimes against women have always been under-reported, even during the times of the deadly Corona virus. 'Me Too' movement, in spite of being one of the most powerful initiatives taken by the feminist movement in India, has seen many obstacles in bringing the abusers to justice; and at times, it has led to reverse complaints and cases of harassment against women in India. While our culture, infused with a fear of patriarchy, has certainly kept many women silent and stopped them from raising their voices, it is also important to look at how it has affected systems dealing with issues of sexual harassment against women in India.

The policies addressing the safety of women that we already have in place have had only a limited impact. Due to this lack of seriousness, little focus has been provided to most of the systemic measures related to gender-based discrimination in India. In order to work around this, we need to treat it as a priority similar to other essentials of democracy with more detailed funds, exclusive attention, and a more advanced strategy. While the verbal advocacy of 'violence against women' has often been used as familiar jargon, the ineffective political initiative on the ground increases the internalized discrimination against women. Our policies essentially follow a black and white mechanical approach to deal with something as sensitive and traumatic as sexual harassment. The state would either prove the person innocent or provide a negative consequence to the guilty. Many negative consequences, particularly capital punishment, merely assert an idea of the state solving a problem without actually ending the problem. Without understanding what leads to similar oppressive cases around the

year, a last-minute, short-term fix like punishing the culprit further sensationalizes the issues and causes immense discomfort to the victim, especially when the abuser is a family member or someone known to her.

A complaint lodged by a victim against her own family member may negatively impact the family dynamics and may lead to increased chances of harassment.

Moreover, the fear of blaming the victim, especially in cases against family members, also looms large. Instead of focusing on the consequences for the culprits, our policies should be more victim-centred. They should spend more time talking to, and understanding the victims and creating an unbiased, easy, practical and recurring system of support and safety that all the victims can keep reaching out to without the fear of getting things more complex with their abusers. Leaders in these systems should have a more sensitive, multi-dimensional problem-solving approach so that the victims can feel heard and supported instead of finding themselves overcoming another 'battle'.

# An evil to ward against

Every day, everywhere, all over the world, women and girls face violence. While there is no single cause for such violence, one of the strongest and most consistent factors is the harmful social norm that upholds male dominance and control over women's bodies and lives.

Around the world, violence against women harms not only millions of women and girls every year, but also their communities and families. Violence against women, whether in the workplace, at home, in a school environment, or as a result of conflict or crisis, is never acceptable. The United States recognizes the inherent dignity that every woman and girl possesses and is committed to preventing and responding to violence against women.

Every woman and girl deserves to live a life free from violence. Eliminating violence against women removes significant barriers to women's empowerment, enabling them to become trailblazers, innovators, and leaders in their communities. These efforts require the dedication of governments, the private sector, and civil society to create an enduring impact. The United States is proud to observe the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25 and the accompanying 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

## Nine Things Women/Girl Can Do To Stop Violence

1. Learn safe routes for walking in the neighborhood, and know good places to seek help. Trust your feelings and if there's a sense of danger, get away fast.

2. Report any crimes or suspicious actions to the police, school authorities, and parents. Be willing to testify if needed.
3. Don't open the door to anyone you and your parents don't know and trust.
4. Never go anywhere with someone you and your parents don't know and trust.
5. If someone tries to abuse you, say no, get away, and tell a trusted adult. Remember, it's not the victim's fault.
6. Don't use alcohol and other drugs, and stay away from places and people associated with them.
7. Stick with friends who are also against violence and drugs, and stay away from known trouble spots.
8. Get involved to make school safer and better - having poster contests against violence, holding anti-drug rallies, counseling peers, and settling disputes peacefully. If there's no program, help start one!
9. Help younger children learn to avoid being crime victims. Set a good example and volunteer to help with community efforts to stop crime.

It is time for the international community to come together to end violence against women, stand with and empower survivors, and emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger than ever before.



# TAKE YOUR STAND; BRING A CHANGE

-Ritu Tomar

"If they kill me, I'll take my arms out of the grave and be stronger." With these words, Dominican activist Minerva Mirabal responded in the early 1960s to all those who warned her of what seemed to be a secret known to all: the regime of President Rafael Leónidas Trujillo (1930–1961) would kill her. Known as "Las Mariposas" (The Butterflies), the Mirabal sisters were born in the Dominican province of Salcedo. On that day, November 25, several secret police officers stopped the car in which the Mirabal sisters were. The women were suffocated and then beaten, and the car was pushed into a ravine to simulate an accident. Patricia Mirabal was thirty-one years old, Minerva was thirty-four years old and María Teresa was twenty-five years old. The killings were ordered by Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo (1930–1961). Ever since their assassinations, the Mirabal Sisters have become the "symbols of popular and feminist resistance." The United Nations General Assembly has designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The premise of the day is to raise awareness of the fact that women around the world are subject to rape, domestic violence and other forms of violence. We need to do more to support victims and hold perpetrators accountable. We have to hold our hands together and fight against violence. In this way we can make this world safer and secured for everybody.



# VAW: A CURSE ON SOCIETY

Kinjal Nanda  
B.Com Prog.

Violence against women is woven into the fabric of society to such an extent that many of us who are victimized feel that we are at fault. Many of those who perpetrate violence feel justified by strong societal messages that say that rape, battering, sexual harassment, child abuse, and other forms of violence are acceptable. Every day we see images of male violence against women in the news, on TV shows, in the movies, in advertising, and in our homes and workplaces. It is a fact of life for women of all ages, races and classes.

From a very early age I, like most women, have thought of rape as part of my natural environment--something to be feared and prayed against like fire or lightning. I never asked why men raped; I simply thought it one of the many mysteries of human nature.

In the broadest sense, violence against women is any violation of a woman's personhood, mental or physical integrity or freedom of movement through individual acts and societal oppression. It includes all the ways our society objectifies and oppresses women. Violence against women ranges from sterilization abuse to prescription-drug abuse, pornography, stalking, battering and rape. It includes the sexual and physical abuse of young girls and the abuse of elders.

Every form of violence threatens all women and limits our ability to make choices about our lives. Sexual violence is particularly insidious because sexual acts are ordinarily and rightly a source of pleasure and communication. It is often unclear to a woman who has been victimized and to society as a whole whether a sexual violation was done out of sexual desire or violent intent or whether these motivations are even distinguishable, because violence itself has come to be seen as sexual or erotic. Thirty years ago, most forms of violence against women were hidden under a cloak of silence or acceptance. As more and more women talked with each other in the recent wave of the women's movement, it became apparent that violence against us occurs on a massive scale; that no woman is immune; and that family, friends, and public institutions have been cruelly insensitive about it.

Although policies and schemes are being carried out to mitigate the matter, the concern seems to grow and double itself with every passing year.

- At international level

-WHO, in collaboration with partners, is:

1) Collecting the evidence based on the size and nature of violence against women in different settings and supporting countries' efforts to document and measure this violence and its consequences, including improving the methods for measuring violence against women in the context of monitoring for the Sustainable Development Goals. This is central to understanding the magnitude and nature of the problem and to initiating action in countries and globally.

2) Strengthening research and capacity to assess interventions to address partner violence.

3) Undertaking interventions research to test and identify effective health sector interventions to address violence against women.

4) Developing guidelines and implementation tools for strengthening the health sector response to intimate partner and sexual violence and synthesizing evidence on what works to prevent such violence.

5) Supporting countries and partners to implement the global plan of action on violence by:-

-Collaborating with international agencies and organizations to reduce and eliminate violence globally through initiatives such as the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Together for Girls, the Violence Against Women Working Group of the International Federation of Obstetrician-Gynecologists (FIGO) and the UN Joint Programme on Essential Services Package for Women Subject to Violence.

-There is some evidence from high-income countries that advocacy and counselling interventions to improve access to services for survivors of intimate partner violence are effective in reducing such violence. Home visitation programmes involving health worker outreach by trained nurses also show promise in reducing intimate partner violence. However, these have yet to be assessed for use in resource-poor settings.

-In low resource settings, prevention strategies that have been shown to be promising include: those that empower women economically and socially through a combination of microfinance and skills training related to gender equality; that promote communication and relationship skills within couples and communities; that reduce access to, and harmful use of alcohol; transform harmful gender and social norms through community mobilization and group-based participatory education with women and men to generate critical reflections about unequal gender and power relationships

### **•At National level**

1)To achieve lasting change, it is important to enact and enforce legislation and develop and implement policies that promote gender equality by:

-ending discrimination against women in marriage, divorce and custody laws.

-ending discrimination in inheritance laws and ownership of assets.

-improving women's access to paid employment.

-developing and resourcing national plans and policies to address violence against women.

-While preventing and responding to violence against women requires a multi-sectoral approach, the health sector has an important role to play.

### **The Health Sector can:**

1) Advocate to make violence against women unacceptable and for such violence to be addressed as a public health problem.

2) Provide comprehensive services, sensitize and train health care providers in responding to the needs of survivors holistically and empathetically.

3) Prevent recurrence of violence through early identification of women and children who are experiencing violence and providing appropriate referral and support.

- 4) Promote egalitarian gender norms as part of life skills and comprehensive sexuality education curricula taught to young people.
- 5) Generate evidence on what works and on the magnitude of the problem by carrying out population-based surveys, or including violence against women in population-based demographic and health surveys, as well as in surveillance and health information systems.
- 6) Stringent action to be taken against the medical practices which promote female foeticide and prenatal sex determination of foetus. Although PC PNDT act of 2003 is still functional but it needs to be made more strict and punitive.
- 7) there should be proper strengthening of supervision at grassroot level in health care centres so as to generate sensitivity about female foeticide.
- 8) India's abused goddess Bell bajao campaign has been a humongous successful campaign for creating intervention at society level towards any kind of domestic violence.
- 9) Together with these interventive steps there is need for right education , gender sensitization and right values should be instilled among children during childhood parenting , right socialization and right religious messages to save the in dignity and honour by respecting them and not violating their existence because children are the future of tomorrow .

- Being NSS volunteers we can create mass awareness through campaigning about slogans like:

- Condemning manhandling, male chauvinism, demanding equity in terms of actions and not just on paper.

- Being an aware member of society it's our duty to spread community level awareness and thereby accumulation social energy so as to fight against this social menace.

Because without United efforts we cannot change the demographics of this deep-rooted problem.

# Covid-19 and *women*

- Ayushi Rahwar  
B.A. English (H)

One of the most pervasive violations of human rights in the world, one of the least prosecuted crimes and one of the greatest threats to lasting peace and development is violence against women.

The figure of the woman which is worshiped as Goddess Durga during Durga Ashtmi or Goddess Laxmi on Diwali and in many other forms on so many other occasions in our country as a ritual is ill treated as a daughter, wife, and daughter-in-law by her family. The tragic story of women is deep-rooted in society from prehistoric times. One of the most revered textbooks like Manusmriti itself states that "Dhol, pashu aur naari tadan ke adhikari" meaning that drums, animals, and women are to be beaten. This derogatory statement by a pious textbook clearly depicts the psyche of the human mind since ancient times. During the later Vedic period, a woman was kept bereft from exercising her humane rights in the form of denial of education, no role in decision making in her family matters, strict restrictions to maintain purity and sanctity of her house especially during her menstrual periods where no one bothered what effect it would have on her life. Polygamy, forced prostitution, sati, divorce, etc. added salt to the burning wounds of miseries. In modern times the situation changed somewhat – as it is said, 'waqt badal gaya, jazzbaat badal gaye aur haalat bhi badal gaye' or 'times have changed, emotions have changed, and conditions have also changed'. The same happened in this case, though violence in newer forms and some older forms continued. Systematic hierarchical set of violence at every stage of life are meted out to women per se.

The irony is there that slowly and gradually as we are becoming more aware, educated, and literate our society has found out 'n' number of ways to violate women's existence and her chastity and the list will keep on lengthening. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified. This is the "Shadow Pandemic" growing amidst the COVID-19 crisis and we need a global collective effort to stop it. As COVID-19 cases continue to strain health services, essential services such as domestic violence shelters and helplines have reached their full capacity. More needs to be done to prioritize addressing violence against women in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

According to WHO, globally, even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, 1 in 3 women experienced physical or sexual violence inflicted mostly by an intimate partner. Emerging data shows an increase in calls to domestic violence helplines in many countries since the outbreak of COVID-19. Sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women continue to occur on streets, in public spaces, and online. Survivors have limited information and awareness about available services and even more limited access to support services. In some countries, resources and efforts have been diverted from violence against women response to immediate COVID-19 relief.

I think we can all agree that the time for complacency is long gone and belongs to another era. The silence on violence against women has to be broken. Now is the time for stronger action. It is time for action when up to 70 per cent of women in some countries face physical and/ or sexual violence in their lifetime. When one in three girls in developing countries is likely to be married as a child bride, when some 140 million girls and women have suffered female genital mutilation, when millions of women and girls are trafficked in modern-day slavery, and when women's bodies are a battleground and rape is used as a tactic of war – it calls for serious action.

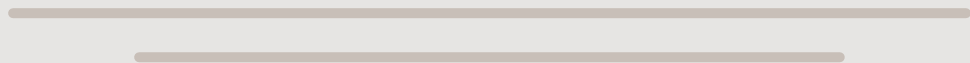


The violence against women has tremendous costs to communities, nations and societies—for public well-being, health and safety, and for school achievement, productivity, law enforcement, and public programmes and budgets.

If left unaddressed, these human rights violations will pose serious consequences for current and future generations and for efforts to ensure peace and security, to reduce poverty and to achieve the sustainable development. Goals and the next generation of development goals, which we keep on discussing .

## **Steps towards elimination of violence**

- There are a growing number of well-designed studies looking at the effectiveness of prevention and response programmes. More resources are needed to strengthen the prevention of and response to intimate partner and sexual violence, including primary prevention– stopping it from happening in the first place.



## Programme Fact Check

Violence against women is a social, economic, developmental, legal, educational, human rights, and health (physical and mental) issue. It is a preventable cause of morbidity and mortality in women. The relationship between violence against women and mental illness has not been adequately explored. Application of laws related to violence in the setting of mental illness is difficult. Despite the social and religious sanctions against it in all cultures, it has continued.

women are also targets of violence in society (e.g., rape, sexual abuse, trafficking, forced prostitution, pornography, violence against migrant women). Finally, certain groups of women are particularly vulnerable to violence, such as those belonging to a minority, indigenous women, refugees and women living in situations of armed conflict.

In all regions of the world, women and girls are subjected to violence because of their gender. Despite the fact that different social, cultural and political contexts give rise to different forms of violence, its predominance and its models are remarkably constant, and cross national and socio-economic borders as well as cultural identities. Gender has a considerable impact on the form violence takes, the circumstances in which it occurs, the consequences, and the availability of legal, medical and social remedies. Because of violence, women are deprived – either totally or partially – of the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.



*The main objectives of the “Violence against Women” programme are:*

- To offer protection to women who are victims of torture or threatened with torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, taking into account the specific nature of the violence used against them.
- To ensure that the respect and the promotion of women’s human rights become an irreversible reality at the same level as men’s human rights.
- To ensure that problems that are specific to women and the violation of their rights are taken into consideration by relevant UN bodies (treaty monitoring bodies) and are granted greater attention.

# ***Raise voice :***

## **END CONFLICT**

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Violence against women dates back to the history of mankind. The factors contributing to violence against women can be intrinsic, within individuals, in the victim or in the perpetrator; or extrinsic, in the environment. The latter could be in the immediate environment (for instance, family) or in the community. Appropriate health promotion information is needed to tackle the associated factors of domestic violence against women and save women from the same. While the issue of gender discrimination and abuse has gained attention recently through an array of different grassroot movements around the world like #TimesUp, #MeToo, #Niunamenos and others, all of these movements are connected by a common global thread. Around the world, far too many girls and women still experience violence and abuse. Today, violence colored with race, caste, creed, gender and politics seems to have entered the very fabric of our society. Like cancer, it is spreading throughout the globe. Women as well as girls face far bitter level of vulnerability, marginalization and resulting violence, especially for those who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, like widows, elderly people as well as women whose sexual orientation someone decides is not acceptable. Both men and women face homophobia, all over the world and are also amongst the most vulnerable in our society. In addition, women with disabilities, indigenous women and women who live with HIV and AIDS. Violence against women and girls not only devastates women's lives and divides communities, but it also undermines development efforts and the building of strong democracies and just, peaceful societies.

To keep quiet and suffer is a bigger crime. Today society has found the courage to stand up for its daughters; it's time then that you too stand up for your rights and demand what is rightfully yours. Today, although the voices of activists and survivors have reached a crescendo that cannot be silenced or ignored, ending violence against women will require more investment, leadership and action. It cannot be sidelined; it must be part of every country's national responsibility, especially during the unfolding COVID-19 crisis. It is not easy to eradicate deep seated cultural value or alter traditions that perpetuates discrimination. Raise public awareness of the poor conditions some women face in rural areas. We can change the harmful beliefs at the core of this problem, as what is learned can be unlearned. It is time for all, women, men, girls, boys and key public actors to end violence against women and girls.

## **HIGH TIME TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**- Prithika Rastogi**

'There is a global epidemic of violence against women-both within conflict zones and within societies at peace- and still it is treated as a lesser crime and lower priority'. Violence against women and girls is a hidden global crisis which knows no boundaries of geography or culture. But marginalized women, such as poor women and girls, are most likely to experience it, most often at the hands of their husbands or partners. There are many different forms of violence which includes domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, child marriage, early marriage and forced marriage, sex trafficking, so called 'honor' crimes and female genital mutilation. Many perpetrators believe that violence towards women and girls is normal and supported by society. They feel that they can commit violence without disapproval.

There are many laws for women safety but still the number of cases of violence against women are increasing. The only reason for that is the oppressive mentality of a male-dominated society. People talk about gender equality but never appreciate a woman for her achievement. They try to denigrate her and for that they use violence. This is not to say that every man is the same. There are those who accord respect to women but their number is relatively very small.

To stop violence against women we need to educate our children to respect every girl and woman right from the beginning of their lives. And for those who are doing such heinous acts, the only punishment is death.

# Orange *the* WORLD

One in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, and the immediate and long-term physical, sexual, and mental consequences for women and girls can be devastating, including death. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified. This is the Shadow Pandemic growing amidst the COVID-19 crisis and we need a global collective effort to stop it. As COVID-19 cases continue to strain health services, essential services, such as domestic violence shelters and helplines, have reached capacity. More needs to be done to prioritize addressing violence against women in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Violence negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. It impacts their families, their community, and the country at large. It has tremendous costs, from greater strains on health care to legal expenses and losses in productivity.

At least 155 countries have passed laws on domestic violence and 140 have legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace. But challenges remain in enforcing these laws, limiting women and girls' access to safety and justice. Not enough is done to prevent violence and when it does occur, it often goes unpunished. Ending violence against women is one of UN Women's key priority areas, with programmes addressing the pandemic implemented globally.

# Theme this year

The theme for International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women this year is "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!" The focus is on bridging the funding gaps to ensure essential services for the survivors of violence during the ongoing pandemic. Like every year, a 16-day campaign will be launched on the occasion starting November 25 and will conclude on December 10, which is observed as the International Human Rights Day. Several events will be organized by various local and international bodies to raise awareness about the need to prevent violence and also to support the survivors. Several buildings and landmarks will be 'oranged' on this day to sensitize people towards the need for a violence-free future. WHO is conducting a webinar on November 26 which will be attended by representatives from various countries who will hold discussion on "Innovations in addressing violence against women in the context of COVID-19". The representatives will share innovative ways to provide support to the survivors of violence during the pandemic.

# BEING A *woman*

- Bhargavi Pal

Women, often regarded weak physically are actually very strong and it is only they who can give birth to a child. The pain she bears during her pregnancy is far more pain that a man ever has to bear. A woman can do anything she wants to do if she gets the right shoe. But many women can't rise due to violence which is inflicted upon them. In India, people worship woman as a goddess yet she is not safe here too. A woman falls prey to violence; in her house she is beaten up and sometimes even murdered for dowry, and it is shocking to think that we live in a society where some people can behave so horrifically and take their own daughter-in-law's life for dowry. A woman experiences violence in streets in the form of verbal abuse, sexual comments, molestation, and even rape. In India there are increasing number of rape cases day by day and despite strict laws in this regard, this outrage is perpetrated. In many cases the accused are put in the jail for a few years; they get bail and usually walk free for lack of evidence. We need strong laws and actions to bring down such cases to zero. Being a woman is not a bed of roses.

# मर्द हूँ, मर्द हूँ मैं

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-जसलीन गावड़ी  
बी० ए० इतिहास (ऑनर्स)

"मर्द हूँ, मर्द हूँ मैं"

यह अहंकार ही पुरुषों की कमजोरी है

जिस दिन हम महिलाएँ यह अहसास दिला पाएं मर्दों को  
वही सही मायने में महिला सशक्तिकरण है  
क्योंकि,

महिलाएँ समाज की वास्तविक वास्तुकार होती हैं

जीवन की कला को अपने हाथों से महिला ने संवारा है  
नारी का अस्तित्व ही सुन्दर जीवन का आधार है

सहनशीलता की क्षमता जितनी हममें है  
आसमान को छूने का हौसला भी कम नहीं है

"सीढ़ियाँ उनके लिए जिनको छत तक जाना है  
जिनकी नज़र बादलों पर हो  
स्वयं बनाना हैं अपना पथ उन्हें।"



# लड़की पूछ रही है

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एकता शर्मा  
बी० ए० राजनीति विज्ञान (ऑनर्स)

क्यों हम दर्द सहें  
क्यों हम खामोश रहें  
क्यों बलात्कार के केस बढ़ रहे हैं  
क्या फ़ायदा जब मारकर लड़की को  
वे जेल में पड़े रहे हैं  
आने वाली पीढ़ी को वे आगाह कर रहे हैं  
लड़की की इज़्ज़त रौंद कर  
क्यों उन्हें बदनाम कर रहे हैं  
करें तो क्या करें  
क्यों नहीं अपने आप को बदल रहे हैं  
क्यों नहीं एक नई शुरुआत कर रहे हैं?

# न्याय चाहिए

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न्याय चाहिए  
एक कमरे में गोली नहीं  
उन दरिंदो कि सजा आम नहीं  
सरे आम चाहिए

न्याय चाहिए  
शरीर को छूने वाले  
कातिल हाथो पे हथकड़ी नहीं  
उस अपाहिज सोच के  
कटे हाथ चाहिए

न्याय चाहिए  
ऐसी दरिंदगी के लिए  
सजा उम्र कैद नहीं  
उसे भी तड़पन का हो अहसास  
मुझे कुछ ऐसा न्याय चाहिए  
जो फिर ना हो ऐसा कांड  
मुझे ऐसा न्याय चाहिए

## अपने हिस्से की लड़ाई लड़ो तुम

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हाथ लड़कियों को भी दिए हैं  
मेहंदी लगाना बेशक शौक,  
लेकिन हाथ जरूरत पर उठाना  
भी सीखो तुम

कब तक समाज से प्रश्न करोगी  
मौन रहने कि आदत है इन्हें  
जरा अपने लिए खुद से  
लड़ना सीखो तुम

सुना है औरतों से हिंसा हो रही है  
ना झुको मदद के लिए  
जरा खुद हिंसा वाले  
हाथ पकड़ना सीखो तुम

लगने वाली हर पाबन्दी  
को मिटाना जरा  
और बहुत हुआ त्याग  
अब सामने वाले को भी  
मानने पर मजबूर करो तुम  
अपने हिस्से की लड़ाई लड़ो तुम

-एकता शर्मा  
बी० ए० राजनीति विज्ञान (ऑनर्स)

# जगत जननी : नारी

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-नंदिनी भनोट  
बी० ए० इतिहास (ऑनर्स)

उतारो मुझे जिस क्षेत्र में  
सर्वश्रेष्ठ कर दिखलाऊंगी  
औरों से अलग हूँ दिखने में  
कुछ अलग करके ही जाऊँगी  
चाह नहीं है एक अलग नाम की  
इसी को महान बनाऊँगी  
नारी हूँ मैं इस युग की  
नारी की अलग पहचान बनाऊँगी

जो सदियों से देखा तुमने  
लिपटी साड़ी में कोमल तन को  
घर - घर में रहती थी वह  
पर जान ना सके थे उसके मन को

झुकी हुई सी नज़रें थी  
वाणी मध्यम- मधुर सी थी  
फिर भी तानों की आवाज़ प्रबल थी  
हिम्मत ना थी उफ़ करने की

दिखाए कोई आँख अगर तो  
ना तुम सहम सी जाना  
चाहे पकड़े कोई हाथ तुम्हारा  
ना डर कर तुम चुप रह जाना

उठो लड़ो और आगे बढ़ो  
अपनी समस्याओं का खुद समाधान बनो  
अबला नहीं हो तुम नारी  
इस बात का अभिमान करो

अब बदल गई है यह पहचान  
नारी की ना साड़ी परिभाषा  
वाणी अभी भी मध्यम- मधुर सी  
पर कुछ कर गुजरने की है  
प्रबल सी आशा

चाहे जो भी मैं बन जाऊँ  
गर्व से नारी ही कहलाऊँगी  
चाहे युग कोई सा आए  
मैं ही आज की जगत जननी कहलाऊँगी

दुनिया के इस कठिन मंच पर  
एक प्रदर्शन मैं भी दिखलाऊँगी  
कठपुतली नहीं किसी खेल की  
अब स्वतंत्र मंच पर पंचम लहराऊँगी

# शायद भूल गए वह नारी है

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-गुंजन नेगी  
बी० ए० व्यावहारिक मनोविज्ञान (ऑनर्स)

आँख मूंद कर कोने में सिसक-सिसक वह रोई थी  
आँखों में सपनों की जगह वह आंसू लेकर सोई थी  
रोज-रोज के वे ताने और रोज-रोज पीटने के बहाने  
तारे चद्दर थे उसकी और पत्थर बन गए सिरहाने

काम-काज कर लेती तो भी सुनती थी वह रोज ताने  
कब तक पचा पाएगी वह भी मार-पीट और गालियों का खाना

कभी मारा तो कभी रुलाया  
कभी जहर तो कभी जलाया  
भूल गए वे दरिंदे कि उनकी  
माँ भी एक नारी है  
दबने वालों में नहीं वह अकेले ही सब पर भारी है

# आखिर क्यों?

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-इशिता मिश्रा  
बी० कॉम (ऑनर्स)

डर,दहशत,भय

जी नहीं,मैं आपको पर्यायवाची शब्दों से परिचय नहीं करा रही  
ये वे शब्द हैं जो एक औरत के जन्म लेते ही  
उसके सिर की छत बन जाते हैं।

जिस औरत को हम दुर्गा मानते हैं  
आखिर क्यों उसी दुर्गा के त्रिशूल के लिए  
हम महिषासुर बन जाते हैं?

जो औरत हमें अपने पैरों पर खड़ा होना सिखाती है  
आखिर क्यों उसी औरत के कदमों की  
हम बेड़ियाँ बन जाते हैं?

जो औरत हमें अंधेरो में भी निडरता से चलना सिखाती है  
आखिर क्यों उसी औरत के लिए  
हम उन अंधेरो में सबसे बड़ा डर बन जाते हैं?

जो औरत हमें दुनिया में सबसे उपर उठाने की कोशिश करती है  
आखिर क्यों उसी औरत के तन और मन को  
हम अपने पैरों तले कुचल देते हैं?

जो औरत हमें जिंदगी देती है  
आखिर क्यों उसी औरत के जीवन के  
हम यमराज बन जाते हैं?

ऐसे न जाने कितने 'आखिर क्यों' हर औरत के मन में  
एक घर की पक्की दीवारों के जैसे खड़े होंगे  
जानते हैं इन सारी पक्की दीवारों को किसने खड़ा किया है?  
जानते हैं इन पक्की दीवारों के मेहनती मजदूर कौन हैं?  
हमारा समाज  
हमारी संकीर्ण मानसिकता  
हम



*There is one universal truth,  
applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is  
never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable*

*Bar Ki-moon*