

This coronavirus pandemic has not just resulted in a global health crisis but have made the world witness its side effects too. The World is not just facing death casualties, the women and girls are facing violence and abuse while they are locked up with their abusers.

The gravity of the situation could be well assessed after UN Chief [warned](#) “Horrible upsurge in domestic violence against women amid coronavirus lockdowns. “He added that “For many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be the safest: in their homes.”

Violence against Women and girls is a human rights violation, a universal issue with great impact on victims/survivors, their families and communities.



Domestic Violence is not an issue which is being raised during this lockdown or has grabbed our attention. This is something which is faced by many women in their day to day lives even before this lockdown. Why it has become a horrifying issue in this pandemic?

The reason behind women becoming more vulnerable to violence and abuses today is the restrictions in their mobility, deepening social and economic stress on the existing resources forcing them in a situation to live with their abusers at the same time and ultimately getting exploited with no peer support and lack of emergency escape.

What is more threatening is the fact that all the services are mostly engaged in addressing the problems of this Covid-19 whether it is the Police or the Health services. This has led to ignorance of this problem or rather we could say that services are being compromised as they are overburdened with the pandemic. Failure of life-saving services in providing relevant support to these women have widened the issue and has become a challenge for all of us. The question is How are we going to bridge this gap keeping women and girls at the centre of concern during this lockdown?

This situation is not just about Domestic Violence faced during this pandemic but as we are moving towards virtual world getting more engaged into online activities during this pandemic, women and girls are also getting cyberbullied through stalking, sexting, offensive emails etc. There have been an increased number of cases of cyberbullying.

This points out to a grave reality that women are not safe in their homes as well as on online platforms during this lockdown. What is more painful to witness is the fact that the technological divide is also adding up to the problem. Women and girls who lack basic technology services like mobile phones or internet access are suffering more. They cannot avail the online services or report it to the organizations that provide support.

Isn't this pandemic further deepening the gender inequalities and exposing women to more vulnerabilities in the present times and for the future too? Yes, it is. The future of women is more prone to becoming uncertain in various spheres whether it is social, economic or political.



Image source: The Guardian

If we go by the numbers and registered data, one in three women faces violence in their lifetime. Globally, 243 million women and girls aged 15-49 have been subjected to violence and abuse perpetrated by their intimate partners in the previous 12 months. But the data emerging shows that since the outbreak of this pandemic, violence against women and girls and particularly domestic violence has globally intensified.

- In France, reports of Domestic Violence have increased by 30% since the lockdown on March 17.
- In Argentina, emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by 25% since the lockdown on March 20.
- In Cyprus and Singapore helpline numbers have registered an increase in calls of 30% and 33% respectively.
- Increased cases of Domestic Violence and demand for emergency shelters have also been reported in Canada, Germany, Spain, UK, and the United States.

Various Responses have been made by Countries to ensure that these issues are addressed in a more vital manner.

- In Canada, domestic violence shelters are to remain open during the lockdown.
- In China, the hashtag #AntidomesticViolenceduringepidemic has taken off as a part of advocacy with links to online resources.
- In Columbia, the government has taken a decision to continued access to services virtually, including legal advice, psychosocial advice and police and justice services.
- In Spain, women can alert pharmacies about a domestic violence situation with a coded message "Mask-19" that brings the police in support.

The need of the hour is to call out for a national response to consider women and girls at the Centre of policymaking and social strategies during this lockdown. Not just virtually, we have to address the issue at the grassroots level.

Because there is something called the Digital Divide in the current circumstances. And to accommodate them also we need to build resilient ground infrastructure so that they can also report and get desired support from their trusted organizations. We need to raise awareness about Domestic Violence among the people through campaigns so that their voices do not become unheard and their faces not be missed out. There should be ensured availability of first responders to provide psychosocial support to the victims/survivors and the paramount necessity should be to treat the services for women and girls who are experiencing violence and abuse as essential services especially during this pandemic.

This is the time to rebuild more inclusive societies because if we start incorporating women and girls at the Centre of COVID-19 response, then it would lead to sustainable development and would bring more equality in the society.

Reference

A policy brief by UN women - UN women website.

Subscribe to the International Relations Updates by The Kootneeti

* indicates required

Full Name

Email Address *

Subscribe

made with  mailchimp



**CERTIFICATE COURSE IN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

SIX-WEEK ONLINE COURSE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BY THE KOOTNEETI

JOIN TODAY!

-  team@thekootneeti.com
-  courses.thekootneeti.in
-  (+91) 120 4565994

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Kootneeti Team

Facebook Comments