

Fighting Against the Menace of Gender-Based Violence by Resorting to Web-Based or Mobile-Based Apps in Namibia

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava*, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava and Jegadeesh Ramasamy

Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu, India

*Corresponding author: Dr. Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Ammapettai Village, Thirupurur - Guduvancherry Main Road, Sembakkam Post, Kancheepuram - 603108, Tamil Nadu, India, Tel: +919884227224; E-mail: drshrishri2008@gmail.com

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Abstract

Achieving gender equality in all facets of life at the earliest has been looked forward as an important goal by the public health stakeholders. Even though, policy makers have been implementing strategies to accomplish the same, a lot needs to be done, especially in low and middle income nations. As a matter of fact, gender-based violence has been acknowledged as one of the most frequent human rights abuses worldwide, which knows no national, ethnic or financial boundaries. In Namibia, an innovative approach has been adopted as different stakeholders have joined their hands to develop high-tech solutions based on web-based applications. To conclude, amidst the ongoing battle against eliminating the social evil of gender-based violence, the use of appropriate science and technology can play a crucial role in reducing its burden significantly.

Keywords: Gender-based violence; Namibia; Technology

Introduction

Achieving gender equality in all facets of life at the earliest has been looked forward as an important goal by the public health stakeholders [1]. Even though, policy makers have been implementing strategies to accomplish the same, a lot needs to be done, especially in low and middle income nations [1,2]. These settings provide an extremely challenging situation for all the stakeholders, predominantly because of the socio-cultural norms prevailing in the society for generations together [1,2].

Trends and Reality

In-fact, it won't be wrong to say that abusing a woman by their partner has been regarded as completely normal not only by the perpetrator, but even by the victim, as they all have been brought up under those circumstances only [1-3]. Furthermore, the situation of gender-based violence is so much common that it has been estimated that across the world, almost 35% of the women have been exposed to violence by men once during their lifetime [2]. This is an alarming estimate and it clearly reflects the failure of the health and other allied sectors to reach to the women as well as in changing the mindset of people, so that women are given equal status as their men counterparts [2,3].

As a matter of fact, gender-based violence has been acknowledged as one of the most frequent human rights abuses worldwide, which knows no national, ethnic or financial boundaries [1,4]. In addition, a rampant rise in the incidence of such events has been reported in

regions affected by humanitarian emergencies or some form of disruption in the law & order situation [5].

Gender-based violence in Namibia

In Namibia, the findings of a nationwide survey indicated that close to 30% of married women were victims of violence by their partners in the last 1 year, while 50% of the study participants, including both men & women, justified the acts of domestic violence [4].

An innovative approach

Although, many strategies have been tried to minimize the incidence of the same, Namibia has resorted to an innovative approach by adopting technological assistance to revert the existing scenario [4]. In this approach, the local government has been assisted by the United Nations Population Fund and other science & technology experts, and all of them have together developed high-tech solutions in a one day session of a hackathon [4].

The newly developed solutions are either web-based or mobile-based apps to combat gender-based violence and are meant for the benefits of a wide range of users, including not only women, but also men, children and people living with disabilities [4]. In-fact, different apps were developed with features of a panic button and live video feed to record episodes of violence and gather evidence for the concerned parties; or apps to assist survivors of violence to get linked with the appropriate authorities; or to report such incidents by means of an internet-based chatting provision; and to send an alert to their supporters with the help of an app pre-installed on their phone, has been developed [4].

Conclusion

To conclude, amidst the ongoing battle against eliminating the social evil of gender-based violence, the use of appropriate science and technology can play a crucial role in reducing its burden significantly.

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