CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN ACROSS THE WORLD BOUND BY CUSTOM AND TRADITION

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Abstract
Harmful Traditional Practices originate from value-based discrimination against particular group of people (especially women and girls) challenging the human rights of those group of people affected by such discrimination. They emerge from gender inequality and unfair qualities, which lead to inconsistent force relations in communities and social orders and to savagery against women and girls. All violations of women’s and girls’ rights may be portrayed as harmful practices, yet there are specific types of viciousness against women and girls which are protected based on custom, culture, religion or strange notion by some community members. These discriminations are mainly carried out without the consent of the girl/woman involved and constituting violation of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The foundations of Harmful Traditional Practices are specifically social norms and beliefs, and specific interpretations of religion. These social norms are the customs or rules that show the values that a general public holds and that administer how individuals ought to act in a given circumstance. The Harmful Trade Practices lead to inconsistent force relations among men and women, advancing and making a circumstance of sex imbalance or gender inequality, rigid gender roles, norms and hierarchies, and ascribing women lower status in society driving male control all throughout the society. The power of traditional culture in the name of sacred tradition is the enemy of women’s dignity and security.

Keywords: Harmful Traditional Practices, Human Rights, Gender Inequality, Social Norms

Introduction
All kinds of infringement of women’s and girl's rights or privileges might be portrayed as harmful practices, however there are specific types of viciousness against women and girls which are shielded based on custom, culture, religion or strange notion by some network members. Harmful practices are referred to in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24(3)), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Articles 2, 5 and 16) and regional instruments. They set up violence against women and girls which include the following namely female genital mutilation, early/forced marriage and marriage by abduction/rape, ‘honour’ crimes, dowry and bride price, sex-selective abortion, acid violence, virginity testing, breast flattening, cosmetic mutilation, corrective rape, female infanticide, ritual sexual slavery, practices related to initiation or menstruation, some widowhood rituals and accusations of witchcraft levied at older women. In many countries there are particular legislations established over time to time planning to curtail these harmful practices on the sake of


2 The International NGO Council on Violence against Children, Violating Children’s Rights: Harmful practices based on tradition, culture or superstition, 2012
religion and in many occasions they additionally contradict nations' current laws identifying with physical and sexual viciousness. These practices are nothing but a result of social norms which intend to maintain cultural ideas about gender roles and social relations. Social Norms are convictions, held by group of individuals, about the manner in which they should act to be an acknowledged citizen, to be accepted in the society.

Many of these practices, including acid violence and sex-selective abortion, have become normal generally as of late however might be viewed as harmful traditional practices as they are established in and maintained by such ideas. Where such practices exist, there might be negative social assents which are experienced by people if the unsafe conventional practice isn't done. Besides the presence of harmful traditional practices, there are some traditional practices which are positive in nature. They help in spreading social positivity, equity in communities and offer social benefits. For example, in many Arabian societies it is a traditional practice to foster orphaned children thinking for the betterment of their future and, in many cultures and communities, people traditionally group together to identify and protect particularly poor and vulnerable people and assist them economically. Societies believe that they are necessary to improve the well-being of the whole community by following the Harmful Traditional Practices. This is the main hurdle that is still needed to be overcome and that is why these harmful practices are still prevailing. The challenge is to find out ways to respect different cultures, and protect positive traditions, at the same time prevention of harmful practices that deny girls and women their human rights, encouraging social change.

Harmful Traditional Practices and affect on Human Rights
The various mentioned harmful trade practices causes contradiction against the essential Human Rights of women and girls resulting long lasting torment and injury and may prompt them to early death. Neither culture, convention, religion nor any kind of odd notion can be utilized to legitimize destructive practices, which comprise rights infringement and viciousness. Harmful Traditional Practices keep girls and women from satisfying their basic human rights including namely the privilege to life and wellbeing, the privilege to non-discrimination based on sex, the privilege to freedom and security of the individual, which incorporates the privilege not to be exposed to savagery and perceives the requirement for youngsters to get uncommon assurances and the privilege to opportunity from barbaric or debasing treatment, and acknowledgment of the inherent dignity of the individual.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
This practice which is linked with the standard traditions associated with cultural or religious beliefs from the very classical time period and has been found to be practised in many countries from the very early ancient period as well as medieval historical period. They are still being broadly practiced in many contemporary societies like South and South-East Asia and Africa, but news are also heard in even developed countries of Europe – at all ages, from a day-old infant to young children, teenagers up to adults. Legislatures
are busy framing laws to stop this heinous process on the grab of tradition.\textsuperscript{3}

FGM is the forcefully practised surgical removal of parts or entire sensitive female genital organs. It is professed to be important to elevate tidiness and to decrease sexual wants and consequently guarantee virginity until marriage, and is at times seen as a soul changing experience service. It can cause both physical and mental harm throughout the life of a woman who had gone through this brutal process. This incorporates haemorrhage and stun at the time of the process, resulting problems with urination and menses, and obstetric entanglements. Girls usually face this cut before the age of 12 as a progenitor to early marriage. Process can be categorised into 4 types:

- clitoral hood is cut off
- whole of the clitoris and the inner labia are cut off
- clitoris and both the inner and outer labia are cut off. The resulting wound is then sewn nearly shut, leaving only a very small opening through which urine and menstrual blood may pass, which is also known as infibulations.
- all other harmful practices including acts like pricking, piercing, pulling, cutting, scraping and burning of female genitalia

These activities are predominantly performed in line with families by ladies who are regularly conventional birth orderlies, paid in real money and kind, and who are vindicated from all results, even demise. This brutal activity takes around ten to twenty minutes and is directed without nearby sedation utilizing instruments, like using bits of glass and fingernails, despite the fact that the cycle is supposed to be turning out to be guided with the aid of medication in various urban communities in developed nations.

**Reasons:**

Various reasons are provided based on beliefs for the performing of FGM:

- to reduce the sexual desire of a women and enhance her loyalty toward her husband.
- to make a girl calm and decent and to make her clean in the eye of society.
- that the prayers made by only circumcised women are believed to be acceptable.
- that this process of female genital mutilation helps to shorten the duration of labor for the circumcised girls.
- if this process is not done the clitoris will grow and dangle between the legs, which will make the girl look ugly and will be unattractive for their husband.

These above are just given for the sake of justification by the communities where still this grievous process is continued. This process is carried out in both Islamic and Christian communities but there is no requirement of this mentioned in both the religions as interpreted by the Prophet Mohammad or the various scholars. Rather is the prevalence in both this religions that it is fact that the human body has been perfectly created by the God and that instead of manipulating that human body in any way, we have to properly look and take care of it.

**Consequences:**

\textsuperscript{3}Adam Lusher, Adam Forest “FGM trial: First ever person convicted of practice in UK jailed for 13 years after mutilating 3-year-old daughter”. Independent, available at https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/fgm-sentencing-trial-uganda-mother-guilty-old-bailey-conviction-a8814051.html (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)
The most noticeable consequences because of Female Genital Mutilations are the effects on wellbeing, including exorbitant draining and contaminations brought about by the utilization of risky instruments, coming about even in death, the more extended term dangerous impacts of obstetric entanglements and deinfibulation and reinfibulation at labor, also infertility. There are additionally reports of mental issues, for example, nightmares. Unavoidably, this practice being carried on still is the clear depiction of the forsaking of basic human rights of girls and women, just because of non-authorization of legislations of the concerned nations. This is one type of harmful traditional practice which curtails the basic human rights of women and girls. Various campaigns are in practise trying level best to stop this process.\footnote{Sabrina Barr, “ANTI-FGM CAMPAIGNER NIMCO ALI TO RECEIVE HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD AT GENEVA SUMMIT”, Independent, available at https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/women/nimco-ali-anti-fgm-campaigner-human-rights-award-iwd-daughters-eve-a8815231.html (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)}

**Honour Killing**
Honour Killing refers to the process by which family members or individuals of a social group murder one of their member of their family or social group because of the disbelief that these perpetrators possess in their mind that the victim has brought dishonour to the family or society. This heinous crime is mostly carried against women and girls. It is believed that the victim, mostly girls and women, by their suspected behaviour has offended the family’s honour and it is believed that only by the process of taking away the lives of these suspected women and girls that the honour of the family can only be restored. As per the estimated report of the United Nations of the year 2000, this heinous process takes lives of estimated 5000 women per year. Its major prevalence is within the Muslim community and mainly practised in Middle Eastern countries like Egypt, Iraq, Iran and so on. Even in the country of Saudi Arabia it has been noted that girls and women are subjected to honour killing only because of texting via social media. Honour Killing is basically the reason of prevailing patriarchy within these countries. In countries like Pakistan\footnote{Asim Tanveer, “Pakistan: Three arrested over ‘honour killing’ of teenage sisters”, Aljazeera, available at https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/pakistan-arrested-honour-killing-teenage-sisters-200518181025193.html (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)} and Afghanistan, family members and perpetrators of the society support the process where girls are publicly stoned to death if they dare to refuse to marry as per their family’s wish. The process of Honour Killing is also noted to exist in few states of India like Bihar\footnote{“Brother in jail for ‘honour killing’ of sister in Bihar's Nalanda”, The Times of India, available at https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/brother-in-jail-for-honour-killing-of-sister-in-nalanda/articleshow/78066513.cms (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)}, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.\footnote{Maria Khan, “Honour killing: Enraged father kills daughter over ‘love affair’, The Times of India, available at https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bareilly/honour-killing-enraged-father-kills-daughter-over-love-affair/articleshow/78173233.cms (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)}

In Lata Singh v. State of U.P\footnote{W.P.(Crl.) 208 of 2004}, the Supreme Court had said: “… inter-caste marriages are in fact in the national interest as they will result in destroying the caste system.” This
was a decade back, but rings truer today. The All India Democratic Women’s Association had demanded enactment of a comprehensive law on honour crimes that goes beyond just the act of murder and focuses on aspects such as compensation to and rehabilitation of the affected family putting reliance on the point of choosing one’s own partner as a fundamental right.

Reasons:
Various reasons are given based on the beliefs possessed in the mind of the patriarchal society or the perpetrators for which Honour Killing is carried out till date. They are:

- opposing to paternal power like denying to enter into forced marriage
- changing dressing style, trying to be westernized, denying to wear traditional garments
- suspected to have sexual intercourse before marriage
- suspected of supporting LGBT community or same-sex marriage
- suspected of smoking or taking drugs or consuming alcohol
- becoming pregnant before marriage

Psychological effects or consequences:
The heinous process causes a detrimental impact on the mental health on all the minds of all the other girls and women belonging to that society. They lose hope even on their family members. Honour Killing undermines both the mental and physical security of women and girls. This heinous process creates the environment of nervousness and danger within the society.

Son Preference
The preference of son over daughters is highly prevailing in many patriarchal societies. The prevailing practice of detecting and abortion in case of female foetus due to the preference for male babies is known as female feticide. This arises from the low value associated with the birth of females. This is mainly done at the command of mother, father of the said child or under family pressure. It is mainly practised in East, Central and South Asian countries. In countries like India9 and China there are clinics that carry on the process of early sex detection and selective abortion of female foetuses. Besides ultrasonography, 'reproductive tourism' is also regarded as the cause of female feticide. In countries where sex determination is prohibited, individuals travel to Thailand, the US, Mexico and different countries where it's lawful to go through Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) is known as Reproductive Tourism. In Thailand, for instance, the Chinese, the East Europeans and Indians structure most of individuals (70-80 percent) leaning toward PGD. As indicated by the Asian Law Institute, more than 80 percent of PGD rehearses were attempted with the end goal of sex choice. Besides Thailand, the US has likewise become the centre for reproductive tourism. As indicated by the report, many Australians began running to fertility clinics in the US when sex choice became banned in the nation. People of Singapore have additionally been going abroad, particularly

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to the US and Thailand for PGD. Daughters are hold to be a burden or liability to the family members even in this 21st century. This is the one of the biggest hurdle which is needed to get overcome as early as possible.

**Reasons:**
The various reasons supporting son preference are:

- it is expensive for raising up a girl child over a boy
- girls are even discriminated based on complexion and beauty in various societies, thus creating their family members think of her as of burden.
- that huge amount of dowry is needed to be paid in order to get a girl married
- that only boys over girl child provides security to their aged parents in future

All these reasons vary among communities. Some of them want to get rid of female children because of poverty, unemployment, superstition, and illiteracy. Socio-economic background and male dominated societies should be regarded as the villain behind female feticide.

**Consequences:**
“Female Infanticide Worldwide: The case for action by the UN Human Rights Council” reported that about 117 million girls demographically go "missing" because of sex-selective abortions, based on continent-wise analysis of infanticides patterns. This is asserted by the United Nations Population Fund. Countries like Liechtenstein, China, Armenia, India, Vietnam, Albania, Georgia, Pakistan and Nepal have the highest skewed sex ratio at birth.

The sex ratio is in rapid decline in India (2011: 918 girls for 1,000 boys), it is one of the biggest outcomes of female infanticide. Thus this decline in the girl compared to boy ratio leads men and their family trafficking women illegally from other areas which lead to sexual abuse and violence against girls and women, increasing child marriages which subsequently cause maternal deaths due to early marriages and forced abortions.

**Child Marriage/Early and Forced Marriage**
Child Marriage is any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties to the marriage under 18 years of age. About 12 million girls are married before the age of 18 per annum. Child marriage constitutes violation of the Convention on Rights of the Child. Even Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 that marriage should be entered after only getting free and full consent of both the parties and a person below the age of 18, consent if taken cannot be regarded as free and willful. In societies where marriage are viewed as the right of families, the children’s permission or opinion are rarely taken and the time of marriage are of such when the children are not able to apply their own thoughts or give their own will. Child marriage is mainly

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11 “Has sex ratio in India improved as compared to the last decade”, Save the Children, available at https://www.savethechildren.in/resource-centre/articles/has-sex-ratio-in-india-improved-as-compared-to-the-decade (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)

12 “Girls not brides”, available at https://www.girlsnobrides.org/about-child-marriage/ (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)
practised on the excuse of tradition and culture. Child marriage is practised throughout the world in different ways and under different names. In South Africa, ‘ukuthwala’ is the process by which young girls are abducted and forced into marriage at the consent of their family members. In many Asian countries like India, Pakistan this process is carried on since immemorial. Despite the prevalence of various legislations and rules in these countries, in many rural areas child marriage is carried on due to lack of execution of these laws. According to UNICEF, India records the highest absolute number of child brides in the world – 15,509,000\(^{13}\). In India, the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006 sets the minimum legal age of marriage as 18 years with no exceptions. Even there have been recent discussions by various activists relating to increasing the minimum age of girls for marriage and to create an uniformity between men and women and to set the minimum age to 21\(^{14}\). In many societies, women and girls possess a lower status because of social conventions and perspectives which deny them their privilege and ability to assume an equivalent role in their houses and communities.

Reasons:
- In many countries, preservation of virginity of a girl is the main concern for their family members to maintain the honour of the family. So parents often force their daughters to marry before age well before they are even ready.
- Poverty plays an important part in child marriage. Many poorer families marry their daughters at early age as less amount of dowry is required for younger girls.
- Betrothal is the process where even before the birth of the girl child, their family members promise to get their girl married with the pre-decided groom once the girl attains the age of puberty. This is often practised to secure the future of the girl by their family.
- ‘Paraya dhan’ refers as someone else’s wealth. In many cultures girls are considered so meaning that girl’s productive capacities only favour their marital families, so less importance is provided in educating them in comparison to the male child of the family.
- Girls are often married early to protect them from corrupted environment prevailing around the house also known as ‘kharab mahaul’ as there are constant reports of rapes and other criminal activities that women often face. Families often in fear opt for early marriage of their daughters.

Consequences:
Firstly, early and forced marriage results in creating the situation of gender inequality within the society. Because of this early marriage, girls are often required to leave schools in order to do household works after marriage and raise child. This process drives them into a continuous cycle of poverty. They throughout generations become more dependent on their husbands or other family members, thus resulting to provide very less importance to the girls and women and their sayings. Mothers who lack education is often

\(^{13}\) “Girls not brides”, available at https://www.girlsnobrides.org/child-marriage/india/ (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)

\(^{14}\) Jagriti Chandra, “Should the age of marriage for women be raised to 21?”, The Hindu, available at https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/should-the-age-of-marriage-for-women-be-raised-to-21/article32517084.ece#:~:text=Madhu%20Mehra%20The%20PCMA%20sets,want%20it%20to%20remain%20valid (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)
found to support the early age marriage of their daughters. Various schemes are initiated by the Government to encourage families to let their daughter carry on education and support them. In India, schemes like “Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao’ and ‘Kanyashri’ have been taken up by both Central and State Legislations respectively. It has also been found that girls who have left their parents and family just to get rid of early marriage have succeeded in near future15.

Secondly, girls who are victim of this child or early forced marriage have higher mortality rate because their sexual health condition is very poor or rather not properly developed in many times. They are often subjected to torture, abuse in their marital houses. Marital rape is a deep concern in many societies and even few countries have legislated laws to criminate marital rape by husbands. Self-independence of girl is of very necessary and various organisations are working for it.

**Dowry Payments**

Dowry is regarded as the ‘wealth’ that a girl brings during marriage and it may be in the form of a house, land, livestock, gold, or the requirements of modern living like car or television. Amount of dowry is often decided between the bride and the groom’s family before marriage and only on fulfilment this condition the marriage takes place or else many a times the marriage gets cancelled. This process is known as dowry payment. It primarily takes place around a dozen of countries mainly in Asia and Africa, directly or indirectly oppressing women. India is still regarded as the epicentre of dowry payments though despite of the existing legislation, Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961.

**Reasons:**

- Dowry is often held as a premortem bequest made to daughters during marriage as a sign of the rights of inheritance held by women. Since over the time, there was lack of legislations relating to the inheritance of women in various countries, thus dowry was paid to economically support daughters after marriage.
- Dowry payments are regarded as prices to clear the imbalance between gender equality prevailing in marriage market. These prices are to equate demand and supply of brides and grooms i.e. when numbers of grooms are relatively scarce brides pay dowries, and vice versa.
- The structure and kinship of marriage in parts of contributes to dowry payment. Practices like polygamy, hypogamy and hypergamy are example of such structures and kinship.
- Various religious beliefs are also supportive to the practice of dowry payment. Not only among Hindus but Muslim communities also support dowry payment, called as ‘jahez’.

**Consequences:**

- When the family of the daughter cannot raise the dowry price as promised, they are often subjected to abuse, inhuman torture and are also murdered by her in laws. It has been reported that more than 8000 women die because of dowry payment per year in India16.

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15 “Girl who fled home to avoid marriage cracks UP PCS exam, says she has more to achieve”, Mirrornownews.com, available at https://www.timesnownews.com/mirror-now/in-focus/article/girl-who-fled-home-to-avoid-marriage-cracks-up-pcs-exam-says-she-has-more-to-achieve/653055 (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)

16 “Pregnant Woman Beaten To Death Over Dowry In UP, Case Filed: Police”, NDTV available at https://www.ndtv.com/cities/pregnant-woman-
This dowry payment is the main reason behind the increasing number of child marriages. Families have to pay less money if girls are married before 18\textsuperscript{17}. Because of dowry, women are viewed as a burden on the family’s economic condition. So often this leads to abort girl child or kill them after birth\textsuperscript{18}.

The reasoning of dowry payment based on economic independence of women after marriage has over the time morphed into a system of only patriarchal dominance in the society and keep women away from economic independence.

Dowries, mostly practised among poor people living in rural areas, often lead them to crippling debt. They often take amount of loans for dowry payment with high rate of interest and being unable to repay such loans have to sell their properties or farmlands.

**Ritual Servitude/Ritual Sexual Slavery**

Ritual Servitude refers to the practise where traditional religious sanctums take people, generally young virgin girls as a payment for services or in strict reparation for supposed misdeeds of the family member(s) of that victimised girl. They serve the priests and the proprietors of those traditional religious sanctums without getting paid for that and even without their consent. People who practise ritual servitude feel that as a rule these girls from the very young age are serving the gods and are married and are only duty bound towards the gods of those sanctums. These practices are often even performed throughout generations of certain families. Human Rights Organisations identifies that these practises that they meet all the aspects of the commonly accepted meanings of slavery.

Various terms represent such practises throughout the world. For example in Ghana, Benin and Togo it is known as ‘trokosi’, where ‘ tro ’ means a ‘god’ and ‘ kosi ’ is used at different times to mean either ‘slave’, ‘virgin’, or ‘wife’, practised by the Ewe tribes.\textsuperscript{19} In India and Nepal such practises are known as ‘devdasi’ or ‘deuki’ or ‘devaki’, practised among the high caste Chetri families of Nepal. They often end up as mistresses ‘kept wives’ or prostitutes who are condemned to illicit relationships. Among the Sherpas, who resides at the northern part of India, a baby girl, regarding her as a gift, is offered to the god and it is known as ‘Jhuma’.

**Reasons:**

- Atonement – This kind of offering of the girl to the traditional religious sanctums, regarded as kind of ‘living sacrifice’ is generally to atone the crimes either committed or alleged to have been committed by the family members of the victim girl, as identified by the priest of such religious sanctums.

- The belief in god and that as human beings we are duty bound to repay god for all his

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\textsuperscript{18}“Is dowry system in India still the reason for female infanticide?”, Save the Children, available at https://www.savethechildren.in/resource-centre/articles/is-dowry-system-in-india-still-the-reason-for-fema (last visited on Oct 1, 2020)  
offerings is another reason why girls are subjected to such practises. Girl is subjected as the offering in these situations by such communities.

Consequences:
Girls are often forced to serve as prostitutes to those priests or owners of those traditional sanctums. It is held as the duty of those girls based on the baseless logic that the genital organs of such priests are dedicated to the gods and thus having sex with the priest is regarded as sacred act or copulating with the gods. They do not possess any kind of self-independence or have the liberty to lead their life according to their own choice. Being born in such communities where people still possess such heinous ideologies, girls are often forced to take away their lives. Various NGOs and Human Rights Organisations are trying to make community-wide agreements to stop the practise of ritual servitude. The active groups in liberating ritual servitude or shrine slaves are FESLIM, Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement, International Needs Network, and Every Child Ministries.

Widowhood Rites
After the demise of the spouse, his widow is often felt liable or as the reason of his demise. She is then constrained by the grab of custom to prove her innocence, for which she has to face extremely distressing rites. These rites are like she has to drink the water used to wash the corpse, sleeping with the corpse for predefined time period. The victim is denied of proper sleep and food. These are practised in few African countries like Ghana, Nigeria. In India, widows are often forced to wear white saree. In parts of UP, Haryana, and Rajasthan, once a woman's husband dies, she is immediately referred to as a mere object - 'it' instead of 'she' - and even basic human rights are taken away from her\(^20\). Still at many rural places in India widows are not allowed to re marry, have to forbid their vanity and even forced to send to the ashrams.

Virginity Testing
It is a gynaecological investigation of female genitalia completed in the deception that it can dependably decide if a lady or young lady has had vaginal intercourse. Practised in more than 20 countries worldwide, women and girls are forced to go through this process just because of the prevailing long-standing tradition. Family members give assent for carrying out this practise on their daughters. WHO have already declared it to be humiliating and affecting the human rights of the women and called for ending this heinous crime. This is often practised by doctors, police officers or community leaders on the belief that it is asses those girl’s virtue or honour. UN agencies have already stated that “there is no examination that can prove a girl or woman has had sex\(^21\)”.

In the Sinhala community of Sri Lanka after marriage, when the bride has her first intercourse, blood coming out from female genitals after such intercourse is regarded as the proof of the virginity of the bride. She is


subjected to mental and physical torture if blood is absent.

**Acid Violence**
This is practised overwhelmingly in parts of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This is used to punish women for a scope of activities like rejecting marriage proposals and the dishonour of rape to land disputes. This not only makes the victim go through difficult medicinal treatments but also makes them subject to social abuse. Countries are implementing strict legislations to stop the heinous crime.

**Protection Of Women: A Responsibility Of All**
The more time these obnoxious, heinous, wicked or disgraceful practices will be carried on based on the grab of tradition and custom, more the concern will increase for the world at large. It is not only just a duty of particular country or religion to fight against these practices but is also an international issue at large. These practices are the main threat to the path of gender equality and ensuring the basic human rights of women and girls. In 1993, since the World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna, it is desire that all States will acknowledge the idea of universality and indivisibility of the human rights of women and that more ratification will be done to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development in September 1994 states:

> ”Changes in men’s and women’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are necessary conditions for achieving the harmonious partnership of men and women. . . . It is essential to improve communication between men and women on issues of sexuality and reproductive health, and the understanding of their joint responsibilities, so that men and women are equal partners in public and private life. . . . Male responsibilities in family life must be included in the education of children from the earliest ages. Special emphasis should be placed on the prevention of violence against women and children.”

**Conclusion**
Despite of the prevailing provisions of the right to equality ensured by the constitution of most of the countries and of International Human Rights Commission, much requires to be done in the field of equality. In the developing countries, majority of the women are unaware of their basic human rights. This is the reason which still lets these harmful traditional practices prevails in the society and affect the well-being of the women and girls and that of their children. Besides the various international organisations, the States have to take the initiative by modifying the social and cultural attitudes of men and women to eradicate such customary practices based on some baseless ideologies of the patriarchal societies. States have to not only restrict their duties only by enacting legislations with strict penal provisions against such obnoxious crimes but even have to look after the proper execution of those legislations by the executives. Comprehensive and intensive programs of both formal and informal education along with raising of awareness and training

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programs by the governmental and non-governmental institutions, NGOs are the only way out from this hurdle. Even technical and monetary support to be given for free to those regional organisations who try to advocate for protection of human rights of the women and promote gender equality. Educating and informing people through different media channels like television, newspapers, workshops, debates are the only rays of hope. Increasing the literacy rate and liberating the mind of the citizens will only help to give the women and girl a better place to live freely.