

Involving Men Volunteers to Effectively Respond to the Problem of Gender-based Violence in Myanmar: United Nations Population Fund

Saurabh Ram Bihari Lal Shrivastava* and Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava

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

INTRODUCTION: Gender-based violence has been considered one of the main social public health problems affecting women from all walks of life around the world. In fact, global estimates indicate that almost 35% of women experience some form of physical or sexual violence, which is alarming and clearly suggests that their human rights violations have become the norm and are not uncommon. . In addition, in most communities it is considered a private problem and therefore very rarely reported due to the associated stigma.

Distribution and determinants of gender-based violence:

Gender-based violence is more of a social concern, as the same trend has continued for generations, where women have been seen as inferior to men. In addition, almost all adult men and women have witnessed incidents of violence in their past, as children, due to which all segments of society believe it to be part of the lives of women, where men can abuse women, while women are supposed to live with the same without thinking that it is something against which they must raise their voice or seek appropriate attention. In addition, the incidence of the problem is increasing dramatically in areas facing humanitarian emergencies. Prevention and control of gender-based violence in Myanmar Recognizing the deep roots of the problem in human society, the impact it has on the growth and development of a woman and, possibly, the progress of a nation, efforts were deployed to neutralize this division between men and women. In response to the problem of violence against women living in an IDP camp in Myanmar, the United Nations Population Fund has launched a new initiative to prevent violence and respond adequately to help the victims. This initiative has two main aspects, namely the development of a network of male volunteers to raise awareness of the essential need to end the violence and to extend medical care, psychosocial support and legal aid to survivors of the violence. The main objective of the initiative was to reach out to other men, not only to raise awareness of the harmful effects associated with gender-based violence, but also to intervene and deter men who engage in domestic violence by advising them as well as involving local community leaders. The initiative has started to show encouraging results, as the incidence of gender-based violence has remarkably declined, and is clearly evident that husbands, fathers, brothers and sons all have started to attend the sensitization sessions, and is even providing a platform for them to discuss their other issues. Moreover, this gives an opportunity for men volunteer to work with female staffs in collaboration and expand the reach of their services [8]. However, before enrolling them as volunteers, men are screened before their recruitment to ensure that they are not themselves the perpetrators. The current strategy of developing

a network of men and involving them to counter this menace is quite an effective approach as evidenced in the studies done in Dar es Salaam and other settings.

CONCLUSION: To conclude, the problem of gender based violence cannot be eliminated unless men are actively involved in the drive. The program managers from different parts of the world should aim to take a leaf out of it and replicate the same in their settings for a better and a favorable outcome.