

સમાનતાના આગ્રહી
સમજદાર પુરુષવર્ગને
આહવાન

CALLING ALL
MEN OF QUALITY,
WHO ARE NOT
AFRAID OF
EQUALITY

મહિલાઓ અને બાલિકાઓ ઉપર થતી હિંસા રોકો

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

ઓળખ

જ્યાં જ્યાં સ્ત્રીઓને હાનિ પહોંચે
ત્યાં ત્યાં ઓળખ સંસ્થાન અને સેવો-માર્ગદર્શન કેન્દ્ર



OLAKH

A space for women

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A young man walked into the college canteen, dressed like any other youth of his age, in jeans and a T-shirt. None would have paid any heed to him but for the white ribbon that he wore on his chest. A group of guys sat on the next table, hanging out as they usually did. Seeing this young man, the gang decided to have a some fun. They started ribbing and making fun of the young man, deriding him for wearing a ribbon. The young man listened patiently for a while then walked up to the gang and asked them **if they wanted to know why he wore the ribbon.**

Caught at their own game, the gang could not refuse. The young man said, "I wear the ribbon as a **symbol to protest violence against women.**"

The white ribbon is in the **memory of a friend, a woman I was very close to.** The one who laughed and cried, shared and fought with me... a friend who is no more, because she chose to fight back when harassed on the train. A friend who was ALONE when she fought back. Tens of others, including men like me stood by turning a blind eye... till she was murdered **"The white ribbon on my chest constantly reminds me that if someone had spoken up, my friend would have been alive today."**

"My mother who gave birth to me, nurtured me, made me what I am today is a woman I would like to see safe always I

"I have a sister, whose safety I worry about. I would like to see hale and hearty always... no matter where she is. She has been my support and guide in my formative years and I want her to be unharmed.

"And one day, I shall have a partner. I take responsibility to create an environment where she feels safe and secure at all times... in all circumstances."

"And I hope and pray that someday I shall have a daughter, and I shall create an environment to see that she lives a life of dignity, self-esteem and self-choice".

"I wear the white ribbon, because it is a **symbol of speaking out protesting violence against women.** I feel I owe it to my mother to wear it, I wear it for my sister... for my partner... for my would be daughter ... for my dead friend ... I wear the white ribbon as a constant reminder of my responsibility to the countless women around me who have touched my life in various ways, that I shall never be a perpetrator of violence, nor will I ever be a mute spectator to any violence against any woman. Would you all like to join the movement?" No one from the gang refused the white ribbons that the young man proffered.

Violence against women is an all-pervasive phenomenon and occurs among the rich, the poor and the middle class and among those of every nationality, religion and race. Violence against women can take several different forms including physical and sexual assault, sexual harassment and psychological or emotional abuse. Not all violence leaves visible scars and not all violence is easily forgotten. There is a popular belief in society that most men love and care about women and do not commit acts of violence and yet:

Statistics from National Crime Records Bureau 2005 says that in India :

- *Every 12 minutes a woman is molested.*
- *An incident of sexual harassment of woman every 42 minutes.*
- *A kidnapping of woman every 43 minutes.*
- *A woman is murdered every 77 minutes*
- *1 in 5 victims of rape is a child.*
- *19 out of 20 rape accusers walk Free, or are acquitted*
- *Every 32 minutes a woman is raped.*
- *One rape out of around 69 gets reported.*
- *52% women suffer physical, mental or emotional violence at least once in their life.*

In a nation wide survey done by the International Centre for Research on Women in 2002 ;

- *40% married Indian women are victims of sexualised violence and the perpetrators are their partners.*
- *85% of men (in a sample population of 971) reported that they had indulged in violent behaviour atleast once , be it physical, psychological or sexual.*
- *32% men had perpetrated violence on their pregnant wives.*

Statistics compiled by women's organizations also show that more than 10, 000 women are killed every year within their own homes, which either get recorded as dowry deaths or accidental deaths and un-natural deaths of women

According to 2001 census in India there were 927 women per 1000 men and in Gujarat 878 women per 1000 men.

We are concerned about all forms of violence. However, our central focus is on gender-based violence against women by men.

Why are some men violent towards women ?

By birth men are not violent, aggressive or uncaring. Men's violence is a result of the way many of them learn to express their masculinity in their relationship with women, children and other men. Many men learn to think of power as the ability to dominate and control people and the world around them. Although a majority of men are not physically violent, this way of thinking makes the use of violence seem acceptable to any.

Boys and men too suffer from stereotyping that exists in a patriarchal culture; men who are gentle are ridiculed and pushed around for being effeminate and "girlish". They are discouraged from being emotional and sensitive and caring; they are pushed into roles of breadwinners, protectors and warriors, whether they are ready for it or not. It is important that men become partners in the movement to end violence against women because not only does it harm women, but it harms men too, by reducing their choices and dehumanizing them. **All men are not responsible for committing acts of violence but all men and women must take responsibility for ending all forms of violence.**

What can we do to end violence against women ?

- **Speak up** : Silence is tolerance and acceptance; challenge yourself and people around you to end violence. This means that as a man who cares about the women in his life, he takes responsibility to help make sure that women live a life free from fear and violence, both within their homes and outside. Men and women, who may until now have remained silent observers, must re-examine their own behaviour, attitudes and thoughts and become a partner in real sense sharing responsibilities, decision making and power.
- **Never be a perpetrator or a supporter of any violence against women.**
- **Don't stand around and watch** while women are being abused, being violated... Physically, Emotionally, Sexually, Psychologically and Socially, Speak out, Protest and Support.
- **Lets work towards changing attitudes!** Legislative reform and legal redress to combat men's violence against women are very important. But laws are not enough. As a community, we need to challenge the institutions that perpetuate inequality between men and women like marriage, education, law, the media, health and other subsystems. In the end, violence neither helps the abuser nor the abused. We need to get rid of attitudes that equate masculinity with superiority and power. Together, lets ensure that all of us live caring and violence free lives.
- **Voice your opinion** : Write on what you feel "Men Can Do To Stop Violence Against Women". Collect opinions and send it to Olakh.

In this world there are many individuals and organisations working for prevention of violence against women. You can be a part of such organisations. All over the world 25th November to 10th December is celebrated as the campaign to Stop Violence against Women and Girls. You can initiate such campaign and raise your voice.

Join your hands with Olakh

Vadodara based organisation **Olakh**, a Feminist Documentation Resource and Counseling Centre is actively involved in raising awareness and providing support to stop violence against women and girls.

If you (or any one you know) are going through stress, anxiety, confusion, feeling of neglect, helplessness and isolation, facing gender discrimination, sexual / emotional / physical violence and abuse at home or at workplace by known or unknown people or friends or if you want to speak to someone or require information, Counseling and Support. You can come to **OLAKH** or call us on the **WOMEN'S HELPLINE TOLL FREE NO. : 1091 or 2485490** from anywhere in Vadodara.

"WOMEN AND GIRLS HAVE A RIGHT TO A VIOLENCE FREE LIFE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM".