

## **"What are some ways that we can end domestic abuse?"**

**by CNEDA Member, Amal Sarah (September 2023)**

Domestic Abuse is a termite that has decayed the household structures for many centuries now. The growing population of the world has imposed damaging effects on the social and family life of people, because it has brought scarceness of resources, economic disparities and injustices along. It is a 'flawed universal truth' that only women become victims of domestic abuse, whereas the truth is that men too become victims of it, but they do not report; which apparently makes us believe that the percentage of domestic abuse is more in women and less in men. Nevertheless, when we know there is an existing problem, one should chase for the solutions that may eliminate or at least minimize its cause and effect.

There is no situation in the world which does not have a solution. Few practical actions can be taken to contribute in the ongoing struggle to end domestic abuse. At first, awareness is a crucial step that can be taken to further the actions. Around the world, mostly in least developed and developing countries, people are unaware of their legal rights and the difference of right and wrong. They have grown up in a family environment, where they have seen their mothers being beaten up and it was considered normal. People have lived in various religious and social backgrounds, where the Scriptures have been misinterpreted for personal good and therefore, this nuisance of domestic abuse kept on harming countless lives in the past and even at present. Hence, awareness becomes an important way, which can be given through training workshops, seminars, webinars, prayer vigils, community projects and raising voices through slogans and social media campaigns. People should be taught the difference of right and wrong, given awareness on legal rights and access to channels of reporting and rescuing themselves.

Adding to the above discussion, education is the most powerful key that can help women and men to overcome the oppressions that may be forced on them. Supporting primary and higher education of girls and boys can help them to come out of the burden of educational costs; which most of the time leads them to quit their dreams. In Pakistan, this is a normal scenario that young girls accompany their mothers to become domestic servants and boys work in automobile workshops, hotels/motels or other vulnerable sites, which takes them to a world of sexual and emotional abuse. Recently, three cases of killing and attempted killing were reported in Pakistan, where girls of age 10-15, working as housemaids were brutally beaten and one even succumbed to death. Those who survived were taken to hospitals for treatment, surgeries and medications. These are reported cases which were shown, while there are thousands of cases that remain unreported. Thus, supporting education of drop out children is the first step where we can save their lives and stop the chain of abuse, which then continues even after marriage and takes the form of domestic abuse.

Another way that domestic abuse can be ended is premarital counselling; which is quite uncommon in many parts of the world. An engaged couple should be taught that marriage is based on trust, understanding and companionship, which makes two people grow in love each day. The premarital counselling sessions should be conducted by religious clerics/priests or mentors, who can guide the couple correctly about the words like submission and dominion in the Scriptures. They should be taught that marriage is to be valued and kept; not to break because of violence, infidelity and unacceptance. A couple should be given time to understand what marriage is all about before marrying.

Lastly, it is significant to mention that people should be made aware that there is no shame in reporting abuse, because this is what most people do not do. Women hide their pain, fearing cultural barriers and men hide because of possessing a mindset of toxic masculinity, which does not let a man shed tears. A person is more worthy than all the pain they suffer being in an abusive relationship.

It is a hope that if the world follows some of the basic steps, then one day, certainly we will say that our struggles to end domestic abuse did not go in vain. It is all about getting yourself ready to take a move.