

Implementing Gender Curriculum Programs to End Gang Rapes and Sexual Violence

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Rape and sexual violence against women has been an epidemic affecting the livelihood of women in both developing and developed nations alike for centuries. However, over the past decade we have seen an alarming rise in a horrific new phenomenon – gang rapes. Not only are these incidents especially violent and heinous, they speak volumes to the deep level of misogyny and patriarchy that continues to pervade both eastern and western cultures. In the past year alone, the Steubenville and Delhi gang rape case have exhibited how much work needs to be done to address male patterns of violence across cultures. Although tremendous reforms must be implemented to rectify inefficiencies in law enforcement and criminal justice laws, addressing the psychology behind gang rapes remains crucial. Specifically, the success of male education and bystander intervention programs can be utilized to address the misogyny behind gang rapes. This paper will evaluate the psychology behind gang rapes and offer recommendations on specific programs that will address existing rape culture.

I. Addressing a Global Rape Culture: Steubenville vs. Delhi Rape Case

On August 12, 2012, two high school football players Trent Mays and Ma'Lik Richmond sexually assaulted a sixteen-year-old girl in West Virginia. The young woman was transported by the football players from one party to the next, where she was photographed and sexually assaulted by them. The survivor had no memory of the event from the night before and woke up naked with three teenage boys around her. It took concerted public outrage efforts and more than nine months for her rapists to finally get convicted of rape. Furthermore, the media played a huge role in raising awareness for and shaping the case. Three months later, across the globe a twenty three year old woman was brutally beaten and raped by six men on a private bus in Delhi. The woman had been traveling with a male friend and both were attacked, beaten badly and thrown out of the bus and left to die on the streets. The young woman was sent to emergency

treatment in Singapore, where she ultimately passed away from her injuries two weeks later. Although protests and outrage occurred through all of India and South Asia, the rapists have yet to face any conviction and are still awaiting a verdict.

Although these two horrific gang rapes occurred hundreds of miles apart, the similarities between the two are indicative of the strong rape culture and high level of misogyny that must be addressed globally. As Nicolas Kristof remarked, “Americans watched the events after the Delhi gang rape with a whiff of condescension at the barbarity there, but domestic violence and sex trafficking remain a vast problem across the United States.”¹ Specifically, the role of male protection rackets in law enforcement, impact of the media and discrepancies with victim blaming all played a big part in how the cases were handled and perceived by the public.

Male Protection Rackets

Male protection rackets, in law enforcement and in football in Delhi and Steubenville respectively, prevented timely identification of information and implementation of criminal justice laws in both cases. Specifically, in Steubenville, a large percentage of the football team (and other male students from the high school) had become privy to the sexual assault that took place. More alarmingly, the Steubenville football coach and other male administrators may have hindered the investigation of the case. For instance, text messages introduced at the grand jury trial indicated that head football coach Reno Saccoccia may have known about the rape allegations but did not report them.² Similarly, in the case of U.S. v. Morrison, a young woman was gang raped by two football players (Antonio Morrison and James Landale Crawford) at Virginia Tech and received no help from administrators in receiving justice of getting her

¹ Kristof, Nicholas D. "Is Delhi So Different From Steubenville?" *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 13 Jan. 2013. Web. 23 Apr. 2013.

² Staff, Crimesider. "Steubenville Rape Case: Grand Jury Investigates Whether Administrators Failed to Report Rape Allegations." *CBSNews*. CBS Interactive, 30 Apr. 2013. Web. 02 May 2013.

assailants convicted. In fact, during the second Virginia Tech Judicial Committee review, her assailant's charges were downgraded from sexual assault to the 'use of abusive language'.³ This was believed have been part of a coordinated university plan to allow Morrison to play football and was led by Head Coach Frank Beamer. Thus, it seems that cultural notions of 'boys will be boys' are almost encouraged by older male role models such as coaches. Furthermore, the culture of football and athletics lends itself to viewing women as objects and encouraging men to assert a certain degree of power and control over them. For instance, the only role of women in football is that of cheerleaders on the sidelines or as sexual objects to reward players. As was seen in both the Steubenville and Morrison cases, the problems within football culture are further perpetuated and almost encouraged and taught to boys by older males, such as coaches. In order to address male only spaces such as football teams, it is important to not only examine how these male only spaces encourage patriarchal behaviors, but also what can be done to break up these male protection rackets. Similarly to football, in the Delhi Rape Case context (and in both the United States and India), male protection rackets within law enforcement play a huge role in sending a signal to males that crimes of rape, sexual assault and domestic violence are not largely punishable. For instance, within the U.S. we witness cases such as *Town of Castle Rock v. Gonzales* where a police force failed to enforce a restraining order to prevent the murder of Jessica Gonzales's three young children from her estranged husband.⁴ Similarly, with the Delhi Rape Case, it was found that members of the Delhi police had been 'evasive' in providing details of officers who were supposed to be on patrol duty in the area where the young woman was raped. In fact, two Assistant Commissioners of Police were suspended for not taking action against prior alleged robbery and assault charges on the man who was driving the bus and for

³ *US v Morrison*, 120 S. Ct. 1740 (2000).

⁴ *Town of Castle Rock v. Gonzales*, 545 US 748 (2005)

failing to prevent the gang rape incident.⁵ By preventing men from being convicted of rape, law enforcement are sending out the subtle message that rape in itself is not that big of a crime – if it were, would it not be more punishable? Thus, male education on gender norms and violence against women within law enforcement and amongst older role models will be a crucial step in implementing legal measures against sexual assaults and advancing the fight to end gender violence.

Discrepancies with Victim Blaming

According to the Indian National Crime Records Bureau, there were over 700 reported rape cases in Delhi, the highest in the last 10 years. Specifically, the number of rape cases was more than double of what were reported in 2002.⁶ With such a high emergence of rape cases, it is interesting that the Delhi Rape Case that occurred in December specifically brought about such intense media coverage and public outrage. It is also interesting to note that the case is just labeled the ‘Delhi Rape Case’ as if it was an anomaly or a type of crime that does not occur regularly in the region. The question that comes up is what made this particular incident so different or rather what finally made people pay attention. The sad reality is that it was a case where victim blaming could not be used to ‘explain’ why such a heinous crime occurred. The young woman who was raped in Delhi had played by societal norms and rules – she was occupied by a male companion, had been dressed in modest clothing and had taken a private bus to go home. She was also a member of the upper middle class and was well educated, combating the notion that such crimes only happened amongst lower income and lower caste populations. Thus, the usual victim blaming rhetoric could not be used and the crime appeared ‘more real’

⁵ ["Two ACPs are suspended"](#). *The Hindu*. Retrieved 28 December 2012.

⁶ "Delhi Witnessed over 700 Rape Cases in 2012, Highest in Last 10 Years." *NDTV.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 May 2013.

and likely to happen to any Indian citizen's sister, mother or daughter. This brought light to the language behind sexual violence and how women are constantly taught how to not get raped instead of men being taught not to rape. Despite protestors vocalizing change in how rape is reported or spoken about, spiritual leaders and legal advocates still made comments to insinuate that the young woman was still responsible in some way. For instance, the defense lawyer of one of the perpetrators, Manohar Sharma, stated "Until today I have not seen a single incident or example of rape with a *respected* lady...Even an underworld don would not like to touch a girl with respect."⁷ Critics sought to pin such sentiments on India's conservative and oppressive culture. However, similar sentiments were seen in the U.S. with the Steubenville victim. Specifically, Royal Mayo, the President of the Steubenville NAACP, described the young girl as an *alleged* victim and inferred that she may have been having consensual sex with her perpetrators.⁸ More so, the media added to the victim blaming sentiment by focusing attention on how the verdict had ruined the young men's lives, with no reference at all to the type of emotional trauma the victim would continue to face. On CNN, reporter Poppy Harlow mentioned that it was "incredibly difficult to watch as these two young men – who had such promising futures, star football players, very good students – literally watched as they believed lives fell apart."⁹ Changing a global culture of victim blaming will be arduous but not impossible. Despite the reporting of both cases, great strides have been made in both Delhi and Steubenville to question why these males thought they could get away with their crimes but most

⁷ Bennett-Smith, Meredith. "New Delhi Gang Rape Victim Partly To Blame For Brutal Attack, Lawyer Manohar Lal Sharma Suggests." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 10 Jan. 2013. Web. 02 May 2013.

⁸ Greenfield, Daniel. "NAACP President Blames Steubenville Rape Victim: "She Was Drunk and Willing"." *FrontPage Magazine*. N.p., 28 Mar. 2013. Web. 08 May 2013.

⁹ The Bilerico Project | Daily Experiments in LGBTQ." *The Bilerico Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Apr. 2013.

importantly why they did not see their actions as wrong in the first place. The existing victim blaming culture is a clear-cut signal for the need to teach young men to NOT rape and engage in healthy and respectful behavior with women.

Role of Traditional and Social Media

Both the Steubenville and the Delhi Rape Case exhibited how social media can be successfully used to bring awareness to crimes of sexual violence. In the Steubenville case, tweets, text messages and videos circulated by the football players played a crucial role in the prosecution's case. Most importantly, the case received media attention in the first place after the group Anonymous was able to post the leaked video all over the Internet and identified the players. Gregg Housh, who is a member of Anonymous, labeled the group's actions as hacktivism and remarked on the role social media is playing on bringing justice and awareness of crimes of rape and sexual violence to the forefront. Housh stated that Anonymous helped develop a "furious consensus" on why the football players weren't being prosecuted for obvious rape and helped "make news to the point where the prosecutor had to pay attention".¹⁰ In India, the use of Facebook and Twitter put tremendous pressure on the government and the judiciary system to prevent sexual assault in the region. Specifically, the incident spurred an 'online agitation' with citizens putting pressure on lawmakers and law enforcement through social networks.¹¹ Although social media activism provides a crucial tool to raise awareness on gender violence issues, the general media continues to hinder the advancement of positive gender norms. For instance, in India we see a rising trend in 'item girl' songs in Bollywood movies,

¹⁰ Petrecca, Laura. "Steubenville Rape Case Driven by Social Media." *USA Today*. N.p., 19 Mar. 2013. Web. 06 May 2013.

¹¹ Prasad, Akanksha. "Delhi Gang Rape Case: Social Media Fuels Rally at India Gate." *The Economic Times*. N.p., 24 Dec. 2012. Web. 08 May 2013.

where a scantily clad woman dances seductively and suggestively to a room full of all males, insinuating that they all are able to get a ‘go’ with her – how can that not contribute to a culture of sexual violence? In the U.S., we see increasing sexualization of young girls at younger and younger ages, with women constantly depicted as objects. Even though critics and activists speak out constantly about misrepresentation of women in the media, it is time to change the conversation to more actively talk about how violence against women is inherently imposed on young boys and men. Open discussions in the media on what defines masculinity is the first step in essentially rewiring young men and women on how to think about healthy interactions.

II. Psychology Behind Gang Rapes

The above analysis between two prominent gang rapes exhibits the need for stronger legal reforms and better law enforcement measures, challenging a culture of victim blaming, and using traditional and social media as an activism tool against sexual violence. The success of all these policies is all based on the same foundation of better understanding the psychology behind gang rapes. In order to even start teaching young men, police officers, spiritual leaders and the media how to prevent violence against women, we need to better understand *why* and the root cause of men committing the heinous act of gang rapes.

Group Dynamics in Gang Rape

Certain social elements of gang rape and violence are somewhat related to basic social group dynamics. For instance, men may believe they are more likely to get away with rape if they are with a large group as there is some statistical likelihood of not getting caught. For instance, some members may believe it is harder to obtain DNA evidence for the prosecution or more so that the victim will be more unlikely to even report the incident out of fear of intimidation from multiple members. More so, the horrible act of rape is condoned within a

larger group in gang rapes and thus a man may believe his sexual actions and desires are not as reprehensible. According to social scientists Andrea Parrot and Laurie Bechhofer, this type of group identification discourages moral self-scrutiny.¹² Specifically, research has shown that a loss of moral scrutiny leads to a higher incidence of gang rape by fraternity members on campuses. Furthermore, the element of ridicule and humiliation imposed on gang rape victims and the lack of bystander intervention (and rather bystander involvement) is much higher in gang rapes than in individual rapes. Better understanding these group dynamics and how they are created or encouraged in male only spaces is the first place activists should look to better understand how to develop solutions to prevent gang rapes.

“How Dare She?” – Gang Rape as a Method to Control Women

Gang rape is a highly violent sexual act where a woman is humiliated and essentially used as one object or toy by multiple group members. However, research has shown that gang rape does not have much to do with sex at all. According to socialist Elaine Replogle, “gang rape is explained more by men’s ‘need’ to perform gender for other men than it is explained by any kind of irresistible sexual desire.”¹³ A 2006 study on the Comparison of Group and Individual Sexual Assault Victims found that compared to individual sexual assaults, group sexual assaults “were in general more violent, involved greater resistance from the victims, and were more likely to be perpetrated by strangers.”¹⁴ Furthermore, many sociologists agree that in gang rapes the intended audience is other men and the act is “much more to do with keeping

¹² Parrot, A. & Bechhofer, L., *Acquaintance Rape: The Hidden Crime*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1991.

¹³ Replogle, Elaine. "The Psychology of Gang Rape." Web log post. *Role Reboot*. N.p., 15 Jan. 2013. Web. 02 May 2013.

¹⁴ Gidycz, Christine A. and Koss, Mary P. *A Comparison of Group and Individual Sexual Assault Victims*. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. Volume 14, Issue 3. Blackwell Publishing Ltd

women in their place than with sexual attraction.”¹⁵ This idea of using harassment and sexual assault as a way to keep women in their traditional gender roles is one that especially echoes throughout South Asia. Regions like Delhi and Bombay have seen an extreme shift in the role of women. A larger percentage of women are now educated, make up a larger portion of the workforce and are financially independent. Women also marry a lot later than before and there has been a drastic shift in gender roles both within and outside the household. Furthermore, as stated by journalist Gardner Harris, “even as India has undergone an economic upheaval that has brought millions of women out of the home and into urban workplaces, a profound attachment to female sexual virtue remains deeply embedded in the Indian psyche.”¹⁶ This has spurred a certain misogynistic attitude of ‘how dare she?’ that has led to an increase in sexual and gang violence against women. For instance, in the Delhi Rape Case it is believed that the victim was so brutally beaten because she tried to fight back. It sparked the idea of “how dare she” – how dare she fight back and not just take the rape, how dare she be out on the streets with a male friend, how dare she be a successful independent student. Gang rapes not only exhibit male-to-male alliances in trying to preserve strong notions of patriarchy but also are an act of violence that allows men to “demonstrate and enact male supremacy over women.”¹⁷ The South Asian culture is not the only context where males utilize gang rapes as a means to reinforce patriarchal norms. For instance, in the South American Mehinaku tribe, gang rape is a “methodical reaction to female subordination” and is often used as punishment when a female commits an act that is

¹⁵ Beth A. Quinn. Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of “Girl Watching”. *Gender and Society*, Vol 16, No. 3. June 2002

¹⁶ Gardiner Harris, “For Rape Victims in India, Police Are Often Part of the Problem,” *New York Times*, (Jan. 22, 2013).

¹⁷ Richard Wrangham and Martin Muller, “Sexual Coercion in Humans and Primates: The Road Ahead” Chapter 18 from *Sexual Coercion in Primates and Humans: An Evolutionary Perspective on Male Aggression Against Females*, Muller & Wrangham, eds. (Harvard University Press, 2009).

not in line with her traditional roles in society.¹⁸ Based on classroom readings, it can also be seen how often gang rape is used as a tool for terror in war as a method to destroy the ‘honor’ of an enemy by raping and sexually assaulting the women on the other side. Gang rape is essentially a (tool/symbol) of gender inequality and from research across different cultures is “the sanction by which men as a group keep women as a group from participating in the religious and political systems as equals.”¹⁹

It is also important to note that this quick transition of women becoming equal players in both the economy and social structure is one that is actually hard for young men to understand when they have seen more traditional gender roles play out while growing up. I had a particular telling personal experience recently with a fellow classmate who always appeared very progressive and liberal and supportive of all my work in gender violence. He was speaking to me about his recent serious relationship and the struggles he was facing, as the girl was a different religion from him. He spoke about the compromise he had reached with his girlfriend to respect each of their individual spiritual organizations and that she would accompany him to his mosque and he would attend her Sunday morning church services. As he discussed this, he remarked “My fathers and uncles had it so much easier. In their day, when they married a woman of a different religion, she took his name and religion and there was no need to compromise. It was just so much easier.” Although this is an otherwise innocuous statement, it speaks volumes to the type of cultural shifts that young men face in understanding the change in gender roles and how to handle them in a healthy manner.

¹⁸ Barbara Smuts, “Male Aggression Against Women: An Evolutionary Perspective,” *Human Nature* (1992).

¹⁹ Barbara Smuts, “Male Aggression Against Women: An Evolutionary Perspective,” *Human Nature* (1992).

Conforming to Defined Role of Masculinity

According to Feminist Gloria Steinem, the recent rise in gage rape seems to be motivated by a culture of aggression and anger and a ‘cult of masculinity’ where perpetrators are not held accountable for their actions and transgressions.²⁰ This idea of earning the reverence of males or male bonding from acts of violence against women has been one that’s been developing in both developed areas and war zones alike. Furthermore, research has shown that rape is more likely to occur in groups as men feel the peer pressure to “uphold the cult of masculinity in the eyes of other men.”²¹ According to a study conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo, many military members rape not out of desire but out of displaying loyalty to their commanders. As one soldier stated, “...The consequences of not committing sexualized violence...would be a severe beating by their superiors. It is a chain of control, together by steely links of pain,” (insert source week readings). This idea of keeping women (and at times other racial groups) subordinated and under control as a surviving mechanism within a group of men is behavior especially exhibited amongst athletic groups on college campuses. In fact, research has shown that ‘elite groups on campuses are most likely to engage in group sexual assault.’²² More specifically, according to researcher Peggy Reeves “as long as exclusive male clubs exist in a society that privileges men as a social category... collective sexual aggression provides a ready stage on which some men represent their social privilege and introduce adolescent boys to their future place in the status hierarchy.”²³ The hazing process in fraternities and the level of sexual violence that occurs at fraternity parties also is such an example of conforming to a certain group

²⁰ Wolfe, Lauren. "Sexual Violence against Women Is the Result of the Cult of Masculinity." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 24 Feb. 2012. Web. 06 May 2013.

²¹ Wolfe, Lauren. "Sexual Violence against Women Is the Result of the Cult of Masculinity." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 24 Feb. 2012. Web. 06 May 2013.

²² Conklin, J. E., *Criminology*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1992.

²³ Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Fraternity Gang Rape*, 19-20 [1990]

moral standard to uphold a certain elite social standing. The same dynamics are present in athletics. For instance, gang rapes are more prominent amongst football players who have more status and prestige on campus than say soccer or baseball members. According to psychologist Robert T. Muller of York University, approximately forty percent of all gang rapes on college campuses are committed by sports teammates. This statistic is sadly not very alarming as we see that traits such as physical domination, hyper-masculinity and blind loyalty to teammates are characteristics of strong sports teams and are constantly rewarded on college campuses. According to researcher Grant M. Johnson of Brandeis University, there is a significant correlation amongst the traits mentioned above with self-reported drug-use and sexual aggression. Specifically, the ‘cult of masculinity’ and a sense of staying loyal to the brotherhood by controlling females or showing them their place as sexual objects is commonplace. Research has shown that in many gang rapes, there is one central leader who seems to lead the group to incite violence. Other male members will either join in or record the activity either to enjoy the experience with their ‘brothers’ or will participate even if they don’t want to only in order to avoid breaking a male bond.²⁴ Research conducted by Richard Wrangham and Martin Muller on sexual behaviors in primates and humans also finds that “whenever men build and allegiance to ... enduring, all-male social group, the disparagement of women is, invariably, an important ingredient of the mystical bond, and sexual aggression which the bond is renewed.”²⁵ It can be argued that male bonding and allegiance to an all male social group is not necessarily a bad thing. Rather, challenging the definition of masculinity and what characteristics make up a

²⁴ Muller, Robert T. "Sports Team Gang Rapes: Are We Breeding Sexual Offenders?" *Psychology Today*. N.p., 31 Mar. 2013. Web. 05 May 2013.

²⁵ Richard Wrangham and Martin Muller, “Sexual Coercion in Humans and Primates: The Road Ahead” Chapter 18 from *Sexual Coercion in Primates and Humans: An Evolutionary Perspective on Male Aggression Against Females*, Muller & Wrangham, eds. (Harvard University Press, 2009).

strong man are the starting blocks of encouraging healthy male behavior that does not involve the subordination of females.

III. Education Programs to Challenge Rape Culture

The above analysis behind the causes of gang rape all point to the same issue – there is a current problem with how masculinity is defined and how young men are reacting to gender roles in both eastern and western societies. Although anti-rape legislation, reforms on law enforcement procedures and public policies on gender violence are all crucial tools towards ending gang rapes, education remains the key and essential tool in addressing the psychology behind gang rapes. Working with youth and encouraging healthy gender interactions at an early age can help us work towards ending patriarchal norms and encourage positive gender interactions. The recommendations from this section will evaluate how education can be used to address the psychology of sexual violence in India and South Asia specifically.

Need to Combat Effects of Pornography

Studies have shown just how detrimental continued use of pornography to be a young male's sexual drive and increased use of violence and aggression towards women. Professor Robert Jensen from the University of Texas has conducted research which has found that pornography has contributed to a significant increase of gang rapes in the past few years, particularly as a specific type of porn, called Gonzo Porn, has gained tremendous popularity. Gonzo Porn are porn movies that depict one women having sex with often two, three or more men at the same time while being beaten and called defamatory names such as sl\$ts, b**tches and wh@res.²⁶ This type of porn not only normalizes gang rapes but also incites desires amongst

²⁶ Srivastava, Sachin. "Who Is Responsible for the Delhi Gang Rape Case – A Complete (Psycho & General)Analysis." Web log post. *Rational Avenue*. N.p., 01 Mar. 2013. Web. 04 May 2013.

males to have sex by coercion. After the Delhi Rape Case, the Indian government has looked into banning porn as a means to curb sexual violence against women. Research on India's Internet browsing records has found that New Delhi has the highest worldwide percentage of searches of porn in 2012 globally. Furthermore, a 2011 study conducted by a mobile technology company found that "one out of every 5 mobile users in India want adult content on his 3G-enabled phone."²⁷ The recent awareness of sexual violence in the country spurred a petition to the government and Supreme Court that asked a law be enacted to make viewing pornographic materials a non-bailable offense.²⁸ Although this may curb the amount of pornography viewing that takes place, it could be argued that an increase in laws is a technical fix that is not addressing the root problem at hand. For instance, distributing pornographic materials is currently illegal in India, but is a law that is very rarely enforced and adult videos and magazines can be purchased quite openly. Furthermore, taking away pornography does not take any action to teach young men what healthy sexuality looks like. Thus, the negative effects of pornography should be countered with proper sex education and gender equality curriculum in conjunction with any legal reforms.

Successes with Campus Education Programs in the United States

Although the United States has a long way to go in ending rape culture, tremendous progress has been made in introducing male education curriculum and bystander intervention programs on campuses. Not only have these programs helped curb dating violence on campuses, they have also played a role on changing perceptions of masculinity. Furthermore, there have

²⁷ Bagri, Neha. "India Considers Banning Pornography as Reported Sexual Assault Rises." *India Ink India Considers Banning Pornography as Reported Sexual Assault Rises Comments*. N.p., 22 Apr. 2013. Web. 03 May 2013.

²⁸ Bagri, Neha. "India Considers Banning Pornography as Reported Sexual Assault Rises." *India Ink India Considers Banning Pornography as Reported Sexual Assault Rises Comments*. N.p., 22 Apr. 2013. Web. 03 May 2013.

been tremendous reforms in legal support to end violence on campuses. Last year I conducted extensive research on existing Department of Education policies, including analyzing the National Victim Assistance Academy (part of the Department of Education’s Health and Human Development Division), which offers a 45-hour core course of work in victims’ services at different college campuses and the current Dear Colleague letter. My research found that the biggest problem in current legislation was that there was no mandate for dating violence and bystander intervention trainings to be held on college campuses. Specifically, there were no specific guidelines set for educating students on school policies and how to identify warning signs of sexual assault. This year with the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE) was also passed which “requires institutions of postsecondary education eligible to participate in federal student aid programs to adopt and disclose...a policy regarding sexual assault and other intimate partner violence.”²⁹ The act specifically requires schools to offer primary prevention and awareness programming on consent, bystander intervention and risk reduction. This legislation will provide tremendous support to existing bystander intervention programs and provide further resources to college students. Secondly, my own experience with hosting Campus Education Seminars with my nonprofit Out Against Abuse and research with other bystander intervention programs has exhibited the importance of implementing male specific education programs. For instance, Jackson Katz’s Mentors in Violence Prevention program has produced tremendous results and has changed the framing of men from “potential perpetrators” to “empowered bystanders who

²⁹ H.R. 6461 (11th) United States. House of Representatives. *GovTrack.us*. By Thomas Perriello. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 May 2013.

can confront abusive peers.”³⁰ The program also uses positive male role models and sends male adults to high schools and colleges to host facilitated conversations on engaging students around preventing men’s violence against women. Using positive role models, creating discussions in male only space and training students on bystander intervention techniques are all great models of successful and effective campus education models used to curb gender violence in the United States.

Implementing Gender Curriculum in India

India’s epidemic of gang rapes and rising violence against women is not one that is new by any means. A very strong patriarchal culture influences how laws are implemented and enforced by the police. Controversial practices of bride burning, dowry (money or property that the bride’s family bestows upon the groom, almost considered a price of a bride) and female infanticide continue to plague the region. It will take many decades to change the patriarchal culture and stringent social norms; however, education is a key method to challenge the current status quo and helping the next generation improve gender equality. Although there are currently many sex education programs in place in India, the topic of sex and dating comes with a huge stigma and is a very taboo topic. Furthermore, in Delhi itself, sex education is supposed to already be in place but is not implemented in all public schools due to limited accountability measures. Thus, I believe gender curriculum in schools and workshops on ‘healthy relationships’ between young men and women are great programs to pursue, as they will be easier to implement and integrate into India’s cultural context. My personal experience with leading Healthy Friendship workshops in mosques in the United States has been tremendously successful. Our workshop talked to Islamic school students about unhealthy patterns such as

³⁰ Katz, Jackson. "MVP Strategies." *MVP Strategies*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Dec. 2012.

emotional abuse and cyber stalking and was so well received by the mosque administrators that we were invited to come back and teach more students. Even more excitingly, our Healthy Friendships curriculum is now being used by other South Asian Domestic Violence Organizations and we have begun a ‘Train the Trainer’ series as well. These workshops allow otherwise traditional and conservative faith based institutions to bring up the taboo conversation of gender violence into their congregations. I believe hosting similar type workshops in public high schools and colleges in Delhi is a first step in curbing gender violence. A critique of this approach may be how can one go about ending sexual violence by not talking about sex education. However, as Amherst student Dana Bolger remarked in her critique of Amherst College’s Sexual Misconduct report, “...we [cannot] have a conversation about rape prevention and response without understanding the underlying causes of sexual violence in the first place...forthcoming reports should develop a more sophisticated understanding of sexual violence – of who is raping, how they are raping, and why.”³¹ Thus, India’s next step should be to develop a better understanding of the psychology behind rape and work with education institutions and on the ground nonprofits to implement gender violence, healthy friendship and bystander intervention programs in public schools.

³¹ Bolger, Dana. "Amherst College Report on Sexual Violence: 'Something [Went] Wrong' " *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 06 Feb. 2013. Web. 06 May 2013.

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