

Call for action plan to check violence against women

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Speakers at a colloquium on "Violence against women and women's rights" organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) today asserted the need to chart out an action-plan to check the increasing violence against women and suggested gender sensitisation training.

Condemning the increase of violence against women, the speakers called for an integrated approach to the issue by various women's groups, NGO's, the judiciary, the police and the civil society to create a climate conducive to mutual respect among individuals and respect for basic human values.

The participants noted that violence against women begin even before birth, when attempts are made to abort female foetus, resulting in a unbalanced sex ratio.

Noted sociologist and the J R D Tata Chair at the Sociology and Social Anthropology section at the NIAS, M N Srinivas suggested education of the girl child and gender sensitisation at the primary level

through text books, and through informal discussion especially in the rural sector of the country.

He pointed out, that women in India are victims of a particular cultural society wherein men are considered superior to women. He said that domestic violence against women has long been a sinister embellishment of inequality within the homes of families and has been rarely acknowledged as a human rights abuse.

He also called for the issue to be addressed and tackled properly at local level.

Mr V V Bhaskar, DGP-CoD, observed that police at all level should be motivated to tackle head-on, violence against women. He said, that in contrast to some of the North Indian States, crime against women in Karnataka had steadily come down over the last couple of years. While, 276 women were raped in the year 1994, the figure stood at 245 last year. While the reported dowry death cases in the State stood at 53 in 1994, it had come down to 36 last year. He said that every police should view women, who approach them for help, as their daughter or mother. "Only then we will be able to reduce crime against women", he

added.

Karnataka High Court Judge Mr Justice A J Sadashiva said, that violence against women would come down considerably, if women are empowered with political and financial power. Secretary II Department of Home Mariswamy called for a change in the mindset of the people regarding the social structure and called for induction of more women into the services.

Additional Commissioner (Crime) K S Suresh Babu urged the initiation of a mechanism for better interfacing between police, women's groups and the judiciary, so that women are not denied justice. He said that special courts need to be set up for speedy trial and early redressal of women's grievances.

Journalist Bhargavi Nagaraj called for applications of the objectives of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) to improve the status of women in the country.

The colloquium on women rights was organised to coincide with the Human Rights Day which falls on December 10.