



#MeToo – GD Topic

Description

What is #MeToo :-

- 'Me too' phrase was first used in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a social activist to raise awareness on sexual assault. She chose this phrase because she regrets not saying 'me too', when a 13-year old told her about the sexual abuse she faced.
- In 2017, #MeToo hashtag became famous when Alyssa Milano encouraged women to share their sexual assault ordeal, so that everyone will know the pervasiveness of sexual abuse in society.
- In 2018, #MeToo became trending after a Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta alleged that Nana Patekar sexually harassed her in 2009. And she stated that she had to quit her career due to this incident.
- Tanushree Dutta inspired many and several women came out and named several sexual abusers among celebrities. This movement strengthened when MJ Akbar was forced to resign for the post of Minister of State for External Affairs, when 16 women alleged that he has sexually harassed them.

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Changes brought by #MeToo revolution :-

- In many cultures, women are discouraged from speaking up against sexual harassment. In India, the situation is even worse. The victim will be labelled as a sexual harassment victim throughout her life. She has to face victim shaming too. #MeToo movement improved this situation. Now, women are encouraged to speak up.
- Many women who are facing sexual abuse now know that they are not the only victims. Often victims are manipulated to such an extent that it is their fault to go through sexual abuse. And they are made to believe that it is better to be silent than to speak up and being labelled. Hearing these personal stories gives them strength to come out and to complain against the sexual abuser. Many people now know that being a victim of sexual abuse is

not something to be ashamed of.

- Those who have power now think twice to use their power in a wrong way.
- Though very few, men are also sharing their sexual abuse experiences. 'Adhyayan Suman vs Kangana Ranaut' case is an example of this. It is very important to spread awareness in society that men can also be victims of abuse.
- Many victims were silenced before as their abusers have power. Now, they are listened and understood. This is a big step towards their healing considering the intense mental trauma sexual assault survivors go through. This can be evident in 'Vinta Nanda vs Alok Nath' case. She wasn't believed when she told her story 19 years back.
- In many cases, though victims followed legal procedure and filed a complaint, these incidents were not revealed to public and hence abusers continued living their life normally despite committing the crime. Whereas victims were further harassed to withdraw the complaint. Now with the power of social media, almost everyone is not willing to work with proven sexual offenders.
- 'National Commission for Women' (NCW) dedicated a separate email id – ncw.metoo@gmail.com. Sexual abuse victims can send a formal written complaints to this email id.

Negative side :-

- Using #MeToo movement, some people are making false allegations and maligning the reputation of innocent people to take revenge or for other selfish motives. There are limitations to freedom of speech. People cannot just make baseless allegations on anyone. Some were not even proceeding legally, they are just telling in social media and are staying silent. People who accuse someone have onus on them to take part in trial if the opposite person do not accept their side of the story. Without it, every man is at threat of being framed as a sexual abuser.
- Some people are anonymously sharing their stories and naming the offenders. This may turn into a dangerous phenomenon anyone can malign someone else's reputation without even revealing their identity.
- Recently POSCO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) act included boys too. But In India, there are no laws for male sexual abuse victims if they are adults. This is very discriminatory towards one gender.
- These cases will undergo trial in courts for years. The overburdened Indian courts may not be able to do justice to the victims legally. On top of that, there may not be any proofs in these type of crimes.
- As of now, only celebrities are utilising the MeToo movement. Common people are still silent and are scared of victim shaming.
- Still some people are blaming the victim, and questioning their choices of work, clothes etc. Some are assassinating the character of victim.
- After Nirbhaya incident, nothing has changed. #MeToo may also become like that.
- Several movie personalities are following double standards. On one side they are supporting Me Too movement, and on another side they do item songs which depict women as an object of sexual desire.

What needs to be done :-

- Proven sexual offenders should be punished as soon as possible to send a positive message in society.
- Several Me Too stories are about child sexual abuse. Many didn't even realize what was happening at the time of incident as they were minors then. So many children across the world are facing sexual abuse. This was once again reminded the importance of giving awareness to children on sexual assaults. Parents should teach their children to openly communicate with them.
- The underlying cause of violence on women is that men and women are taught from a very young age that the men are the stronger one and should be so. This puts immense pressure on young boys to be dominant and follows the wrong theory of masculinity. Many young boys think women are of less value. In many families of India, male member will be the head of the family. This also teaches them that they have this entitlement. It is very important to teach the issue of gender equality to young children.
- There should be punishment for those who make false allegations. But it will be very difficult because proving it as a false allegation is also tough.

Conclusion :-

#MeToo movement brought a positive change in society. It is very tough for women to speak about the sexual abuse they gone through. Most of the victims suffer the mental trauma throughout their lives. This encourages the offenders to commit crimes repeatedly. Me Too has changed this situation for the better. It encouraged victims to speak up and to heal in the process. It also made sexual offenders regret their actions, because now victims are speaking up. Though some people are misusing the movement, this can be solved with a proper legal procedure.

The main success of Me Too movement is that it taught many people that it's not their fault to be a sexual abuse victim. This movement started shaming offenders instead of victims. Many people now do not want to be associated with the proven sexual offenders. It is a big step towards reducing violence against women. Behavioural change is needed to further reduce these kind of crimes.

Your Turn...

What is your opinion on #MeToo movement? Express your thoughts in the comment section below. Subscribe to our blog to receive updates whenever a new post is published.

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