

# Is it women alone, who have to change?



**Shalini, psychiatrist. For contact:  
innertempleshalini@gmail.com**

A woman in live-in relationship was butchered and her limbs were thrown about at various places by her lover in Delhi. This dastardly crime came to light several days later.

Before commenting on the murder, we have to understand the background behind such crimes.

## **Danger of break-up**

Even in the traditional marriage arranged by parents, it is the new in-laws who cause lots of trouble and misery to women. So, the cruelties against women cannot be attributed to the live-in relationship alone. Is this unconventional relationship formed owing to the women's courage? No. The really daring and courageous women go the way they themselves cultivate. The parents generally sever ties with their daughters who never heed

their words or disobey them. Hence, when in trouble, the women cannot turn to their parents for help.

The parents and close relatives must not part ways with women altogether if they don't want injustice happening to their women.

Girl children are brought up, indoctrinated with the idea of their husbands turning their guardians in future. The very concept of husband being a guardian is per se an illusion.

The man whom a woman prefers as her husband or her parents arrange for her must first be checked for credentials. Whether he is basically a natural and normal man must be ascertained. For that a little knowledge of psychology is a sine qua non.

### **Personality defects**

There are hundreds of psychological problems. Some will afflict only the sick. The complexes such as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), Anti-Social Personality Disorder (ASPD) will also affect all others around.

Usually, a person's mental health can be checked and known only after moving with him or her for some time. But our marriage system does not give room for such a pragmatic approach.

It is really the oxytocin, a hormone of motherhood, which binds a woman to a man in an emotional relationship she finds it difficult to break free of. So, women are unable to walk out on their own on the maladaptive attachment without proper clinical treatment.

### **Where is change needed?**

Women are generally struggling to give up on wrong and incompatible relationships for fear of causing scandal in the society. The fear is over the 'people' wagging tongues indiscriminately.

Such women are not supported by the society which is rather contemptuous towards the hapless women caught on the horns of a dilemma in marriage. It is this general attitude which pushes the unfortunate women into the worse position.

It is more or less this kind of attitude that measures a man's respectability with the yardstick of his earnings. This keeps a man always on the tenterhooks, expecting acceptance by the society. Consequently, he becomes fond of adopting a domineering attitude.

We are, after all, just cogs in the giant wheel of culture. We are struggling to fulfil the demands of the values we are unknowingly assimilating. We never think whether these values are good or bad, right or wrong.

So only if a paradigm shift happens in the total system of cultural values, security and safety for women will become possible. Instead, blaming the live-in relationship and women alone for the mess will not pave the way for a permanent solution.

**Translated by V. Mariappan.**