

Gender and development approach to reducing gender-based violence

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Abstract

This paper examines the main causes of gender-based violence (GBV) in tertiary institutions and find ways of reducing the phenomenon in these institutions. The context of higher learning, in which women are under-represented in positions of authority and lectureship, and the structural inequalities, increase gender-based violence in tertiary institutions. Unequal power relations, and the cultural values, that operate on a patriarchal system are the primary cause of inequality leading to gender-based violence even in institutions of higher learning. In a patriarchal society, women are perceived as perpetual minors who cannot take independent decisions. That alone promotes male superiority. Gender equality cannot be achieved without considering the issue of equity. The absence of Hunhu/Ubuntu, results in undesirable outcomes such as sexual harassment in schools, colleges and universities. True Ubuntu recognises differences, and hence, always strives to strike consensus. Ubuntu makes a fundamental contribution to indigenous 'ways of knowing and being' and is 'based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing and respect. A holistic approach in promoting gender equity and equality will help combat gender-based violence in institutions of higher learning. Mainstreaming a gender perspective at all stages is important. Gender mainstreaming involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparations, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach to addressing issues of power relations is very critical. The GAD approach seeks to correct systems and mechanisms that produce gender inequality by focusing not only on women, but by assessing the social status of both women and men. The paper advocates for gender policies that are not just gender sensitive but gender responsive - policies that seek to promote zero tolerance of GBV.

KEYWORDS: Gender and Development (GAD), Gender Mainstreaming, gender socialisation, Hunhu/Ubuntu