

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi Disciplinary
Peer Reviewed Edition :

www.ijlra.com

DISCLAIMER

No part of this publication may be reproduced or copied in any form by any means without prior written permission of Managing Editor of IJLRA. The views expressed in this publication are purely personal opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editorial Team of IJLRA.

Though every effort has been made to ensure that the information in Volume 2 Issue 7 is accurate and appropriately cited/referenced, neither the Editorial Board nor IJLRA shall be held liable or responsible in any manner whatsoever for any consequences for any action taken by anyone on the basis of information in the Journal.

Copyright © International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis

IJLRA

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITORS



Megha Middha

Megha Middha, Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmangarh, Sikar

Megha Middha, is working as an Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmangarh, Sikar (Rajasthan). She has an experience in the teaching of almost 3 years. She has completed her graduation in BBA LL.B (H) from Amity University, Rajasthan (Gold Medalist) and did her post-graduation (LL.M in Business Laws) from NLSIU, Bengaluru. Currently, she is enrolled in a Ph.D. course in the Department of Law at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur (Rajasthan). She wishes to excel in academics and research and contribute as much as she can to society. Through her interactions with the students, she tries to inculcate a sense of deep thinking power in her students and enlighten and guide them to the fact how they can bring a change to the society

Dr. Samrat Datta

Dr. Samrat Datta Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Samrat Datta is currently associated with Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Datta has completed his graduation i.e., B.A.LL.B. from Law College Dehradun, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand. He is an alumnus of KIIT University, Bhubaneswar where he pursued his post-graduation (LL.M.) in Criminal Law and subsequently completed his Ph.D. in Police Law and Information Technology from the Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur in 2020. His area of interest and research is Criminal and Police Law. Dr. Datta has a teaching experience of 7 years in various law schools across North India and has held administrative positions like Academic Coordinator, Centre Superintendent for Examinations, Deputy Controller of Examinations, Member of the Proctorial Board



Dr. Namita Jain



Head & Associate Professor

School of Law, JECRC University, Jaipur Ph.D. (Commercial Law) LL.M., UGC -NET Post Graduation Diploma in Taxation law and Practice, Bachelor of Commerce.

Teaching Experience: 12 years, AWARDS AND RECOGNITION of Dr. Namita Jain are - ICF Global Excellence Award 2020 in the category of educationalist by I Can Foundation, India. India Women Empowerment Award in the category of "Emerging Excellence in Academics by Prime Time & Utkrisht Bharat Foundation, New Delhi.(2020). Conferred in FL Book of Top 21 Record Holders in the category of education by Fashion Lifestyle Magazine, New Delhi. (2020). Certificate of Appreciation for organizing and managing the Professional Development Training Program on IPR in Collaboration with Trade Innovations Services, Jaipur on March 14th, 2019

Mrs.S.Kalpna

Assistant professor of Law

Mrs.S.Kalpna, presently Assistant professor of Law, VelTech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi. Formerly Assistant professor of Law, Vels University in the year 2019 to 2020, Worked as Guest Faculty, Chennai Dr.Ambedkar Law College, Pudupakkam. Published one book. Published 8Articles in various reputed Law Journals. Conducted 1Moot court competition and participated in nearly 80 National and International seminars and webinars conducted on various subjects of Law. Did ML in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration. 10 paper presentations in various National and International seminars. Attended more than 10 FDP programs. Ph.D. in Law pursuing.



Avinash Kumar



Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC - NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR - Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and

learning.

ABOUT US

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

ISSN

2582-6433 is an Online Journal is Monthly, Peer Review, Academic Journal, Published online, that seeks to provide an interactive platform for the publication of Short Articles, Long Articles, Book Review, Case Comments, Research Papers, Essay in the field of Law & Multidisciplinary issue. Our aim is to upgrade the level of interaction and discourse about contemporary issues of law. We are eager to become a highly cited academic publication, through quality contributions from students, academics, professionals from the industry, the bar and the bench. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS ISSN 2582-6433 welcomes contributions from all legal branches, as long as the work is original, unpublished and is in consonance with the submission guidelines.

PURITY TEST: - MATTER OF RESPECT

AUTHORED BY - KAMYA THAKUR

B.A.LLB

AMITY UNIVERSITY, PATNA

Abstract

In the world of open marriages India still has an opinion of virgin brides which is going to be the topic of this article *purity test:- a matter of respect*, and it could be the matter of a bride's life and death, in the recent case of the Maharashtra murder case, a 12 years old girl murdered by his 30 years old brother just because of he thinks her sister involve in sexual intercourse and she is no more *virgin*. In India, women are revered and regarded as divine beings; nevertheless, the unfortunate reality is that our society has subjected them to cruelty, aggression, and bias. One of the most insulting forms of harassment is the virginity test. To ascertain if a woman is still a "virgin," a virginity test involves a physical examination to check for hymen ruptures. Even though the World Health Organization states that a "virgin" hymen cannot be differentiated from a "non-virgin hymen," a woman's virginity is still used as a yardstick for assessing her character. The study examines the ethical and legal ramifications of the virginity tests that are utilized in India by a variety of organizations and medical specialists. The research looks at the actions made by various social initiatives, constitutional. The paper deals with the social and legal implications of the virginity testing used by various groups and medical professionals in India. The study examines the efforts taken by different social initiatives, constitutional defences, and court rulings to defend women's dignity in opposition to activities including virginity tests.

Introduction

The concept of purity, particularly in the context of matrimony, is deeply ingrained in many cultures around the world. In India, it has been a considerable part of the cultural narrative, particularly concerning women and their roles in society. The so-called 'purity tests', which women were, and in some cases, are still expected to undergo, serve as a reflection of a society's views on morality, gender roles, and the sanctity of marriage. This article aims to examine the notion of purity tests for girls in India before and after marriage, analyzing their historical roots,

their impact on women, and the shifts in attitudes in contemporary society.

We all know that India developing day by day, and it stands in industrialization and globalization recently India reached the moon, but still apart from this India is diverse in some old rituals. Equality among all people is the cornerstone of every civilized society in the highly developed and advanced era of today. However, the two-finger test and the virginity test continue to be socially stigmatized practices. An ancient Indian tradition is the virginity test. A virginity test is a method used to ascertain the purity of a young woman. To verify that she has never had a sexual relationship, she can take a virginity test connection or have never engaged in any sexual activity before marriage. The test of virginity is a girl's innocence and has something to do with her personality. Usually, the exam consists of an inspection of female gentiles for the existence of hymen and bleeding during their first sex¹. One of the key marital rites amongst various Indian tribes is the virginity test. The consequences of a virginity test on the tested girl's ability to maintain her basic rights are also immoral. When there is suspicion of rape or child sexual abuse, a thorough hymen examination may be necessary to be carried out, however, the hymen condition by itself frequently yields conflicting results. A girl's first virginity test as a sign of virginity must be abandoned as it is a traumatizing, challenging, and infuriating custom. Akin to violence directed at women.

In India, women are revered and regarded as divine beings; nevertheless, the unfortunate reality is that our society has subjected them to cruelty, aggression, and bias. One of the most insulting forms of harassment is the virginity test. To ascertain if a woman is still a "virgin," a virginity test involves a physical examination to check for hymen ruptures. Even though the World Health Organization states that a "virgin" hymen cannot be differentiated from a "non-virgin hymen²," a woman's virginity is still used as a yardstick for assessing her character. The study examines the ethical and legal ramifications of the virginity tests that are utilized in India by a variety of organizations and medical specialists. Women occupy a paradoxical position in the varied tapestry of Indian societal standards, being both adored as celestial beings and, simultaneously, exposed to

¹ Utgikar, P. (2023). Virginity Test In India: Age-old Practice Still Prevalent. [online] latest News of India Today. Available at: <https://theprobe.in/stories/virginity-test-in-india/>.

² India will finally drop 'virginity test' from its medical course. (n.d.). The Times of India. [online] Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-will-finally-drop-virginity-test-from-its-medical-course/articleshow/85923077.cms> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

appalling cruelty, aggression, and persistent bigotry³. This contradiction is highlighted starkly via the perspective of the contentious and profoundly intrusive practice of virginity tests, which remains inside the nation's cultural fabric. Despite their seemingly elevated status, women face one of the most humiliating types of harassment: the virginity test. This invasive examination, purportedly conducted to ascertain a woman's virginity status, involves a physical inspection aimed at identifying hymen ruptures. Strikingly, this procedure, rooted in antiquated beliefs about female purity, stands in stark contrast to the scientific consensus on the matter.

The World Health Organization, a global authority on health matters, unequivocally asserts that distinguishing between a "virgin" hymen and a "non-virgin" one is a scientific impossibility. Despite this, the archaic notion that a woman's virtue is somehow encapsulated within the integrity of her hymen persists, revealing a disconcerting disconnect between prevailing societal norms and established medical facts⁴. The use of a woman's virginity as a yardstick for assessing her character is not only an affront to individual dignity but also raises profound ethical and legal concerns. This discrepancy between entrenched cultural practices and contemporary medical knowledge demands a rigorous examination of the implications and repercussions. Beyond the confines of tradition, this study delves into the ethical and legal ramifications surrounding the widespread utilization of virginity tests in India, dissecting the involvement of various organizations and medical specialists in perpetuating this intrusive practice.

Ethically, the practice of subjecting women to virginity tests raises questions about bodily autonomy, consent, and the violation of personal privacy. The study scrutinizes the moral implications of a society that continues to place undue importance on a woman's virginity, often at the cost of her emotional well-being and psychological health⁵. Moreover, the perpetuation of such tests can be seen as a manifestation of gender-based discrimination, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and perpetuating an environment where women are unfairly judged based on arbitrary criteria. Legally, the study navigates through the labyrinth of existing laws and regulations—or the lack thereof—about virginity tests in India. It explores potential gaps in the legal framework

³ Dyson, T. and Moore, M. (1983a). On Kinship Structure, Female Autonomy, and Demographic Behavior in India. *Population and Development Review*, 9(1), pp.35–60. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/1972894>.

⁴ Global Citizen. (2018). UN Calls to End 'Virginity Tests' Around the World. [online] Available at: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/un-stops-virginity-tests-female-20-countries> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

⁵ Two-finger test: Why it is banned in India? Finology Blog - Latest Updates & News on Current Affairs and Laws in India. Available at: <https://blog.finology.in/Legal-news/two-finger-test> (Accessed: 03 December 2023).

that may allow for the persistence of such practices and assesses the need for legislative reforms to align with the principles of gender equality, individual rights, and medical ethics. Additionally, the study sheds light on instances where legal action has been taken or where advocacy efforts have paved the way for change, offering a glimmer of hope for a more equitable future

Historical context

In conventional Indian culture, dignity and respectability were frequently linked to the idea of purity. It was expected of girls to remain pure until marriage, which was frequently connected to their virginity. Because of how strongly held this notion was, females were frequently required to undergo "purity tests" before to marriage. Although the specifics of these examinations differed depending on the area and society, the ultimate goal remained the same: to determine the girl's virginity. After being married, women were supposed to represent the archetype of the "chaste wife," a person of impeccable morality who is devoted to her husband. There was tremendous pressure from society to uphold this façade of purity, and any dissent was frequently met with harsh repercussions, such as social exclusion and, in extreme guided by religious texts and societal norms⁶. The concept of female chastity was highly idealized, and a woman's virtue was often linked to her marital status and perceived sexual purity. The hymen, a physiological feature, instances, aggression. The historical examination of India's virginity test practise offers crucial background information for comprehending the deeply ingrained origins of this invasive and contentious custom. This analysis covers several centuries and demonstrates the intricate interactions between socioeconomic, religious, and cultural elements that have supported the continuation of this practise. Concepts of humility and purity were deeply ingrained in Indian culture throughout antiquity, frequently became a representation of this virtue, giving rise to the idea that a woman's morality was defined by her integrity. Religious and cultural practises formalised and reinforced societal standards and expectations around women's conduct across many periods of Indian history, including the Vedic era and the mediaeval period. These standards, which placed a strong emphasis on female modesty and conformity to social norms, set the stage for virginity tests to become a widely accepted indicator of a woman's moral integrity. India's history saw a dramatic shift during the colonial era, which saw a collision between indigenous beliefs and Western ideas. Social conventions about women's morality endured despite the efforts

⁶ The India Forum. (n.d.). The India Forum. [online] Available at: <https://www.theindiaforum.in/gender/enforcing-ban-two-finger-test>. [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

of colonial rulers to impose their moral beliefs. Victorian morality, which frequently confused virtue with femininity, had an impact chastity, which strengthened the practice's cultural foundation. India had a socio-cultural revolution after independence, with initiatives supporting women's rights and gender equality gaining traction.

Despite these encouraging developments, patriarchal systems and deeply rooted cultural views allowed some regressive practises, such as virginity tests, to endure. There has been a noticeable change in societal attitudes in India in recent decades as the country has become more urbanised and globalised, particularly among the younger population. Virginity tests are a practise that activists and advocacy groups have fiercely opposed, pointing out that it violates women's rights and lacks scientific basis. However, the fact that these exams are still used in some societies highlights the continuous conflict between conventional wisdom and contemporary ideals. Comprehending the historical development of virginity tests in India highlights the intricacies ingrained in cultural standards and highlights the daunting obstacle of tearing down deeply ingrained customs. It highlights the requirement. for delicate interventions that promote progressive ideals and legislative changes while attending to cultural sensitivities. Thus, the historical research provides a crucial lens through which to understand the beginnings, development, and tenacity of this practise, directing current initiatives towards societal change and the defence of women's rights. Fighting the purity test is much more than simply eliminating an antiquated custom; it's also about confronting the deeply embedded patriarchal values that support it. It's about creating a culture in which a woman's value is derived from her uniqueness, skills, and contributions to society rather than from her married status or perceived chastity. The deeply ingrained practice of purity or virginity tests in India manifests in various forms across different communities, shedding light on the diverse cultural contexts within which these customs persist. One poignant example is the Kanjarbhat tribe, where the custom of imposing 'virginity tests' on brides is an unsettling tradition. This practice, highlighted by al-Jazeera, reflects a community-specific norm that places an undue burden on women to prove their chastity, perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes⁷. In several communities, including some mentioned by the Washington Post, the expectation for a virgin bride to demonstrate her purity takes the form of staining a cloth with blood from her broken hymen. This ritual underscores the obsession with the physical

⁷ Johari, A. (2018). Meet the young activists fighting to end virginity tests for brides among Maharashtra's Kanjarbhats. [online] Scroll.in. Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/866982/meet-the-young-activists-fighting-to-end-virginity-tests-for-brides-among-maharashtras-kanjarbhats>. [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

manifestation of virginity, reducing a woman's worth to the presence or absence of a specific physiological marker. Such practices not only infringe upon individual privacy but also perpetuate an archaic mindset that links a woman's virtue solely to her sexual history. Beyond these examples, additional 'purity tests' exist, each embedded in its own cultural and regional context. The pani ki dheej, or purity by water, suggests yet another method employed to assess a woman's virtue. The agnipariksha, or trial by fire, draws parallels with historical and mythological narratives but, when applied in a contemporary context, raises serious ethical concerns about the bodily autonomy and well-being of women. The kukri ki rasam, involving a stained bed sheet, is another manifestation of the fixation on physical evidence of virginity. Adding to the troubling array of practices, the two-finger test, as reported by India.com, represents a particularly invasive and discredited method. This test, which involves a physical examination to assess vaginal laxity, has been widely condemned for its lack of scientific validity and potential to cause psychological trauma to the individuals subjected to it. It is important to emphasize that these methods, despite their prevalence in certain communities, are not endorsed by medical or scientific authorities. The widespread criticism and controversy surrounding these practices underscore the urgent need for societal reflection and legal intervention. The violation of women's rights, the perpetuation of harmful gender norms, and the lack of medical validity in these tests collectively highlight the pressing need for cultural sensitivity and progressive reforms. Understanding the nuances of these varied 'purity tests' prompts a critical examination of the deeply rooted norms that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and underscores the importance of challenging and dismantling such practices in the pursuit of a more equitable and just society⁸.

Revealing Truths: Investigating the Odd Behaviours

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the practice of cutting, removing, and sewing parts or all of the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is performed on the girls after their birth till puberty but mostly is cut at the age of 5 and 6. The procedure is usually done by a traditional circumciser using a blade and other similar stuff which is unsterile and highly unhygienic. The logic behind such traditional practice is to prevent the sexual insertion into the female's flower before getting married which according to the practising communities is a sign of her upbringing, purity, modesty, and her family's honour. Usually, the stitches are opened by the husband after the

⁸ InUth. (n.d.). InUth.com [online] Available at: <https://www.inuth.com/india/did-you-know-brides-in-some-indian-communities-are-forced-to-take-a-virginity-test> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

marriage⁹.

VIRGINITY TEST AND INDIAN CONSTITUTION ARTICLE 21 VIOLATION:

The Indian Constitution states in Article 21 that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except by the procedure established by law." Before the Maneka Gandhi case, Article 21 solely protected individuals' rights to life and personal freedom from the executive branch's arbitrary actions. It did not extend to legislative action; the state was free to restrict people's freedoms provided legislation was in place to allow such interference. However, as a result of the Maneka Gandhi ruling, Article 21 now shields citizens' rights to life and personal liberty from both legislative and executive action. If two requirements are met—first, there must be a law; second, there must be a method defined by that law, as long as the procedure is equitable and reasonable—a person may be the proof of his life and be deprived of his life and liberty¹⁰. Courts have held in several decisions that life includes more than just sustenance—it also includes dignity, freedom, privacy, and other things.

Furthermore, the definition of "rape" has expanded significantly with the 2013 Criminal Law Amendment. It currently consists of several items that are harmful to a woman's body. Therefore, unless it qualifies under Section 375 IPC's exemption 1, which states that "A medical operation or intervention shall not be rape¹¹,

But A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Hima Kohli heard a criminal appeal in The State of Jharkhand vs. Shailendra Kumar Rai 2022. They declared that the traumatic and invasive practice ought to be removed from medical study materials, that anyone found to have performed such a test ought to face harsh punishment, and that the act ought to be viewed as professional misconduct¹².

⁹ Köbach, A., Ruf-Leuschner, M. and Elbert, T. (2018). Psychopathological sequelae of female genital mutilation and their neuroendocrinological associations. *BMC Psychiatry*, 18(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1757-0>.

¹⁰ Ishaan (n.d.). Article 21 : Constitution of India : All Landmark Judgments. [online] lawyersclubindia. Available at: <https://www.lawyersclubindia.com/articles/article-21-constitution-of-india-all-landmark-judgments-13787.asp>. [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

¹¹ www.legalserviceindia.com. (n.d.). Lawyers in India - Advocates, Law Firms, Attorney directory, Lawyer, vakil. [online] Available at: <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-9754-an-overview-on-female-genital-mutilation-looking-into-the-bohra-community.html>. [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

¹² Farouki, L., El-Dirani, Z., Abdulrahim, S., Akl, C., Akik, C. and McCall, S.J. (2022). The global prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting: A systematic review and meta-analysis of national, regional, facility, and school-based studies. *PLOS Medicine*, 19(9), p.e1004061. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1004061>.

The Supreme Court ruled in *Lilu Rajesh and Anr v. State of Haryana (2013)*¹³, a significant case, that the two-finger test is unconstitutional. It violates the right to privacy as well as the dignity, bodily, and mental integrity of those who have experienced sexual assault. The assumption of permission cannot be assumed automatically, even if this test yields favourable results.

In the case of *Surjit Singh Thind v. Kanwaljit Kaur*¹⁴, the wife requested a divorce, thus the husband wanted to display her virginity test. He couldn't have kids, after all. Because requiring a woman to undergo a virginity test is against Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which protects her right to privacy and her dignity in life, the court turned down the husband's plea.

The judgment in *Sadaf Aziz v. Federation of Pakistan*¹⁵, WP No. 13537 of 2020, said that although virginity testing is carried out in the guise of medical procedures in situations of sexual violence, it is very intrusive and has no scientific or medical foundation. It is humiliating to do that. It's not proof that the victim wasn't raped or subjected to other forms of sexual abuse if it turns out she wasn't a virgin. The attention is shifted to whether or not the victim is a virgin, and the one who committed the offence is placed on trial rather than the victim. The victim's sexual orientation is completely irrelevant in this situation.

It is not right to rape even the most promiscuous victim, and a virginity test is not the appropriate tool for determining whether or not there has been sexual assault. It damages a woman's self-esteem. These examinations damage a woman's dignity and harm her social and cultural status by drawing judgments about her sexual past and personality.

The Delhi High Court ruled on February 7, 2023, in the case of *Sr. Sephy v. Union of India*¹⁶, January 1, 2009, that it is unconstitutional to subject a female detainee, an accused person under investigation, or someone in police or judicial custody to a virginity test. This is because Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees everyone the right to dignity.

The right to dignity under Article 21 is one of the fundamental rights that cannot be violated or

¹³ *Lill" @ Rajcsk & A→í :s Statc Or HaiQa→ia" - S"pícmc Co"ít or I→dia, Cíimi→al Appcal No. 1191 or 201«.*

¹⁴ *Punjab-Haryana High Court, Civil Revision No. 1799 of 1990*

¹⁵ *Łakoíć Higk Co"ít, Wíit Petitio→l No. 1«5«7 or 2020.*

¹⁶ *Kclki Higk Co"ít, Cíimi→al Appcal No. 597 or 200®*

taken away from a person, the Court further stated¹⁷.

However, privacy is a necessary condition for living a meaningful life. Since the term "privacy" is not defined in the Constitution and is open to judicial interpretation, Article 21 of the document recognizes it as a basic right. Confidentiality, physiological integrity, psychological independence, and non-interference are all aspects of privacy. The Indian Constitution's Articles 14 and 15 are violated by virginity tests¹⁸. Art. 14 declared Priorities over the law On Indian territory, the State shall not deprive any individual of equal protection under the law or equality before the law. Article 15 of the document states that it is illegal to discriminate against someone based on their religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. This Golden Triangle of Fundamental Rights covers all facets of life that contribute to a man's meaningful, full, and worthwhile existence and ensures our very survival, without which we cannot survive as human beings¹⁹.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, reform is necessary as we attempt to navigate the complex web of societal conventions surrounding virginity examinations in India. It goes beyond questioning an antiquated custom; it is an appeal to challenge deeply rooted patriarchal standards. We must all reflect on how we might make society more just and equitable, support legislative changes, and make a commitment to preserving the values of equality and human dignity for everyone. As we work to end the practice of virginity testing, we have the chance to build a society in which women are valued for their uniqueness, skills, and accomplishments rather than for their marital status or apparent purity. The following are some important recommendations:

Suggestions

Educational Initiatives: Put in place extensive educational initiatives to increase public understanding regarding the negative effects of virginity testing and encourage gender awareness.

¹⁷ Farouki, L., El-Dirani, Z., Abdulrahim, S., Akl, C., Akik, C. and McCall, S.J. (2022b). The global prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting: A systematic review and meta-analysis of national, regional, facility, and school-based studies. *PLOS Medicine*, 19(9), p.e1004061. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1004061>.

¹⁸ www.lawctopus.com. (2021). Article 21 of the Constitution of India: Understanding Right to Life and Personal Liberty from Case Laws - Academike. [online] Available at: <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/article-21-of-the-constitution-of-india-right-to-life-and-personal-liberty> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2023].

Legal Reforms: Push for more robust legislation that forbids virginity tests outright and imposes harsher punishments on anyone who participates in or encourages them.

Medical Ethical Principles: To deter healthcare providers from participating in virginity testing, the medical community should establish and enforce explicit ethical principles.

Community Involvement: Promote candid conversations in communities to question and alter conventional wisdom, creating a climate that recognises women for their intrinsic worth independent of social norms.

Support Systems: To help those who have been the subject of virginity tests, provide support networks and counselling services that address their mental and physical health.

International Cooperation: Take part in international cooperation to exchange tactics and experiences in the fight against detrimental practices, such as initiatives aimed at ending female genital mutilation (FGM).

Media Advocacy: Use the media's influence to dispel myths about virginity, promote good narratives about women, and confront prejudices.

Political Will: Motivate decision-makers to take up the cause and back laws that upend patriarchal systems and advance gender equality.

A multimodal strategy that incorporates cultural, educational, and legislative interventions is needed to change society's views. By putting these recommendations into practice as a group, we can help build a society in which every woman has the liberty and dignity to choose her path in life.