



Through this social media campaign Maitri is starting a dialogue with men in our community to identify and eliminate the root cause of gender based violence and partner violence.

Thank you Shri Bheesette for joining us in this meaningful discussion.

In what ways can men be allies to women, in their day-to-day life?

Educating themselves about the issues that women face, such as the gender pay gap, reproductive rights, and sexual harassment and assault.

Speaking out against sexism and misogyny when they see it, whether it is in their personal or professional lives.

Supporting women's leadership and promoting women to positions of power.

Being conscious of their own privilege and using it to amplify the voices and experiences of women.

Listening to women and valuing their perspectives and experiences.

Being an ally means being proactive in advocating for women's rights, rather than just not being actively sexist. It means actively working to dismantle the systems that hold women back.

Encouraging other men to be allies as well, and working to create a culture of allyship.

Remember that being an ally is an ongoing process, and it requires continuous learning and self-reflection. It is important to be open to feedback and to listen to the experiences and perspectives of women.

How can men inspire other men to develop a sense of equity and respect toward women in their day-to-day dealings?

There are several things that men can do to inspire other men to develop a sense of equity and respect toward women in their day-to-day dealings:

Be a good role model: Show other men, through your words and actions, that it is possible to be a man and also be respectful and equitable towards women.

Educate yourself: Learn about the issues that women face and the ways in which the patriarchy and other systems of power have disadvantaged women. This will help you to better understand the importance of allyship and why it is necessary.

Educate others: Share what you have learned with other men. This could be through conversations with friends, writing articles or blog posts, or even giving presentations.

Challenge problematic behavior: If you see other men behaving in a way that is disrespectful or discriminatory towards women, speak out and challenge that behavior.

Encourage open and honest dialogue: Create a safe space for men to have open and honest conversations about gender and gender equity. This could be through a men's group or even just one-on-one conversations with friends.

Show empathy: Help other men to understand the experiences of women by listening and trying to put themselves in their shoes.

Lead by example: Show other men that it is possible to be strong and confident without being domineering or aggressive.

What is the role of a man to be a good role model for future generations?

The role of a man as a good role model for future generations is to set a positive example for young people to follow. This includes showing respect and kindness towards others, treating people fairly and equally, and being a good listener and an open-minded individual.

It is also important for men to be aware of the ways in which traditional gender roles and expectations can be harmful, and to actively work to challenge and break down those barriers. This includes being an ally to women and other marginalized groups and advocating for social justice and equality.

Finally, a good role model for future generations should be willing to listen to and learn from others and be open to self-reflection and personal growth. By being a positive role models in these ways, men can help to create a better world for everyone.

Does it make you uncomfortable when you hear jokes that are offensive to women? What are generally the consequences if a man objects toward an offensive / locker room joke?

Jokes that are offensive to women, or to any group of people, can contribute to a culture of discrimination and disrespect. They can also cause harm to the individuals who are the target of the jokes and can make them feel marginalized or belittled.

I feel that if a man objects to an offensive joke, it is important for him to speak up and make it clear that he does not find the joke acceptable. By taking this action, he can help to create a more inclusive and respectful environment for everyone.

It is also important for men to recognize that it is not their place to tell women how they should or should not feel about such jokes. Instead, they should listen to and respect the perspectives and experiences of women.

The consequences of objecting to an offensive joke may vary depending on the specific situation and the individuals involved. In some cases, the objector may be met with resistance or pushback. However, it is important for men to be willing to stand up for what they believe in and to speak out against discrimination and disrespect, even if it is not easy or popular to do so.

Have you come across any situation in your life when your male friends / acquaintances took pride in cheating on a woman or making a mockery of her feelings behind her back? How did you feel about it?

Unfortunately, I did have some friends who I met during my studies who took pride in cheating on a woman, thinking it was nothing unusual and insulting her behind her back.

Cheating on a partner is generally considered a betrayal of trust and a violation of a person's commitment to a relationship. It can cause significant emotional pain and harm to the person who has been cheated on.

Making a mockery of someone's feelings is also generally considered to be disrespectful and hurtful. It is important for people to show empathy and respect for the emotions of others, and to treat them with kindness and consideration.

If you are in a situation where you witness this kind of behavior, it is important to speak up and let the individuals know that their actions are not acceptable. You can also consider reaching out to the person who has been harmed and offering your support and care.

Do you see women around you (school, workplace, family, in community etc.) facing inequality / injustice? Can you give any examples? What can men do in ending that inequality?

I have numerous examples of women facing inequality and injustice in workplaces and in a family. I have seen the ladies of my house being the ones who are always taking care of the

houses, doing everything to support the home and children, and spending hours tending to matters that they do not receive any help from their male counterparts. I have strongly advocated that this should stop and have implemented this change from my own family as they say, “change begins at home”.

It is, unfortunately, the case that women continue to face inequality and injustice in many areas of society. Some specific examples of ways in which women may experience inequality or injustice include:

The gender pay gap, in which women are paid less than men for doing the same work.

Limited access to leadership positions and other opportunities for advancement.

Higher rates of sexual harassment and assault.

Limited access to healthcare and reproductive rights.

There are many things that men can do to help end inequality and injustice against women. Some specific actions that men can take include:

Educating themselves about the issues that women face and the ways in which the patriarchy and other systems of power have disadvantaged women.

Being an ally to women and actively working to dismantle the systems that hold women back.

Speaking out against sexism and misogyny when they see it, whether it is in their personal or professional lives.

Supporting women's leadership and promoting women to positions of power.

Being conscious of their own privilege and using it to amplify the voices and experiences of women.

Listening to women and valuing their perspectives and experiences.

Encouraging other men to be allies as well, and working to create a culture of allyship.

Have you witnessed around you a situation where your male friends control their girlfriends, curb their freedom to speak, dress, or carry themselves the way they want?

It is, unfortunately, the case that some men do attempt to control their partners, including by curtailing their freedom to speak, dress, or carry themselves in the way that they choose.

This kind of behavior is generally referred to as relationship abuse or domestic violence and is never acceptable. It is important for men to recognize that they do not have the right to control their partners or to dictate how they should behave.

If you are in a relationship where you feel that your freedom is being restricted or that you are being controlled by your partner, it is important to seek help and support. This could include talking to a trusted friend or family member, reaching out to a domestic violence hotline or

counseling service, or seeking support from a trained professional. Remember that you have the right to live your life free from abuse and control, and there are resources available to help you.

If you have seen a public figure being openly controlling/abusive to their partner? Can you give us an example? How did you feel about it? / How do you feel popular media perpetuates and glorifies toxic partner relationship dynamics; can you think of any examples?

There have been so many instances in high-profile societies like the movie industry, or famous personalities in sports, industry, etc., where I have observed women being dominated by men and being controlled by how they dress up or be presented in society. It is unfortunate that some public figures have been openly controlling or abusive toward their partners. These behaviors are never acceptable and can have serious consequences for the individuals involved.

It is important for people in the public eye to be held accountable for their actions and to be held to a high standard of behavior. If you witness a public figure engaging in controlling or abusive behavior, it is important to speak out and let it be known that such behavior is not acceptable.

Popular media can sometimes perpetuate and glorify toxic relationship dynamics, such as those in which one partner is controlling or abusive. This can happen through the portrayal of such relationships in movies and television shows, or through the way that celebrities are depicted in the media.

It is necessary for people to be aware of the potential influence of media on their perceptions and behaviors, and to be critical of the messages that they are consuming. It is also important for media producers and creators to be mindful of the messages that they are sending and to strive to portray healthy and positive relationships.

Can you think of any circumstances (in family set up or in community setting) when women are shamed for not being stereotypical or do not fit into a mold? How did you feel about it to see when women were not supported?

It is, unfortunately, the case that women are often shamed or marginalized for not conforming to societal expectations or stereotypes. This can happen in a variety of settings, including within families and communities.

Some specific examples of ways in which women may be shamed or marginalized for not fitting into a mold might include:

Being pressured to conform to traditional gender roles, such as being expected to stay at home and care for children rather than pursuing a career.

Being ridiculed or ostracized for expressing their sexuality or gender identity in a way that does not conform to societal norms.

Being judged or criticized for their appearance, such as for not meeting conventional standards of beauty.

Being belittled or dismissed for having opinions or interests that are not considered "feminine" enough.

It is important for people to recognize that everyone has the right to be their authentic selves and to live their lives in a way that is true to who they are. It is never acceptable to shame or marginalize someone for not fitting into a particular mold or for not conforming to societal expectations.

I can understand why it might be disturbing or frustrating to see women not being supported or valued for who they are. It is important for people to stand up for what they believe in and to speak out against discrimination and disrespect, in order to create a more inclusive and equitable society for everyone.

How do you think gender power dynamics impact intimate partner violence?

Gender power dynamics can have a significant impact on the prevalence and nature of intimate partner violence. In many cases, intimate partner violence is perpetrated by men against women and is driven in part by the desire to exert control and dominance over a partner. This can be particularly true in relationships where there are already power imbalances, such as when one partner is financially dependent on the other or when there are significant differences in age or status.

Research has shown that men who subscribe to traditional gender roles and who have a strong sense of entitlement are more likely to engage in abusive behavior. Similarly, women who are socialized to be submissive and to prioritize the needs of others may be more vulnerable to abuse, as they may be less likely to speak out or seek help.

It is important for people to be aware of the ways in which gender power dynamics can contribute to intimate partner violence, and work to create more equitable and respectful relationships. This can involve challenging and breaking down traditional gender roles, promoting gender equality, and providing education and resources to help prevent violence.

What is men's responsibility in building healthy partner relationships?

Men have a responsibility to be respectful, kind, and considerate in their relationships with partners. This includes treating their partners with empathy and understanding and showing them care and support.

Men should also be mindful of the ways in which traditional gender roles and expectations can be harmful, and strive to create more equitable and healthy relationships. This may involve challenging their own assumptions and behaviors, and being open to learning and growing.

It is also important for men to be aware of the signs of unhealthy or abusive relationships, and to seek help if they or their partner are experiencing such a relationship. This can include talking to a trusted friend or family member, reaching out to a domestic violence hotline or counseling service, or seeking support from a trained professional.

Finally, men have a responsibility to be good role models for others, including for future generations. This means setting a positive example for others to follow and working to create a more inclusive and respectful society for everyone.

What are your thoughts about division of labor or household chores in a couple or family situation?

In a couple or family situation, it is important for household chores and responsibilities to be fairly divided and for all members of the household to contribute to the maintenance and well-being of the home. This can help to create a sense of mutual respect and cooperation, and can also alleviate the burden on any one individual.

Traditionally, household chores and responsibilities have often fallen disproportionately on women, and this can contribute to gender inequality and stress for women. It is important for couples and families to be conscious of this dynamic and to strive for a more equitable division of labor.

This might involve having open and honest conversations about household responsibilities and finding ways to share the workload in a way that works for everyone. It is also important to recognize that everyone has different strengths and abilities and to be flexible and willing to adapt as needed.

Ultimately, the most important thing is for couples and families to find a system that works for them and that promotes mutual respect and cooperation.

Do you think women are judged differently than men for common attitudes and traits? For instance, competitive women being called bossy or shrill whereas a man is called confident and strong? What other biases can you think of?

Yes, it is common for women to be judged differently than men for exhibiting the same attitudes and traits. This is often referred to as "double standards" or "gender biases," and it can have a significant impact on the way that women are perceived and treated.

One specific example of a double standard is the way that women who are perceived as being competitive are often labeled as "bossy" or "shrill," while men who exhibit the same traits are more likely to be seen as "confident" or "strong." This double standard can have the effect of

undermining the leadership and authority of women and can make it more difficult for them to succeed in competitive environments.

There are many other biases that can impact the way that women are perceived and treated. Some other examples include:

The "beauty bias," values women primarily for their appearance and often holds them to impossible standards of beauty.

The "likeability bias," assumes that women must be liked in order to be successful and that they must be "nice" in order to be respected.

The "motherhood penalty," can result in women being judged or penalized for having children or for taking time off to care for their families.

It is important for people to be aware of these biases and to work to challenge and dismantle them. This can involve speaking out against discrimination and inequality and advocating for fairness and equality for all.

Do you think women experience more “push-back” or what we call a “maternal wall” after they have kids? For example, not being hired or other biases associated with motherhood?

The case in which many women experience what is often referred to as the "maternal wall" or the "motherhood penalty," in which they face discrimination or bias because of their status as mothers. This can take many forms, including:

Being passed over for job opportunities or promotions because of the assumption that they will not be able to fully commit to their work due to family obligations.

Being paid less than their male counterparts with similar qualifications and experience.

Being judged or criticized for their parenting style or for taking time off to care for their families.

Being stigmatized or marginalized in the workplace because of their maternal status.

It is important for people to recognize that being a mother does not make a woman any less capable or qualified to succeed in her career or other endeavors. It is also important to challenge and dismantle the systems and structures that contribute to the maternal wall and to work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

About the author:

Shri Bheesette is a Principal Product Engineer working in the Semiconductor industry. He grew up in India before moving to New Zealand for his studies and eventually to the bay area for his job.

