

VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIAN WOMEN : A STUDY

□ Bhabatosh Bhakta*

ABSTRACT

India has crossed sixty-nine years of Independence but in this male-dominant society, violence against women has not ceased, but it has gained momentum. The Delhi –gang-rape case is a living testimony to this fact. In India, every minute a woman is either raped or beaten by this so-called superior sex. Murder, wife battering, rape, exploitation, kidnapping, abduction, dowry death, etc. are Rampant in society as if they are its part and parcel. In this era of globalization, where we are all talking of all-around technological development, the state of women in India is, as it was a hundred years ago. This paper seeks to highlight the social malice i.e. Violence against women. It tries to explain the different types of violence, the reasons behind them .and it also attempts to suggest some remedial measures to curb this evil. According to the United Nations, violence against women implies “any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including, threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” In India, violence against women is primarily divided into three types: Includes rape, kidnapping, abduction, murder, etc.? Includes wife – battering, dowry deaths, sexual abuse maltreatment of widows and elderly women, etc. including eve-teasing female foeticide, traffic of women, sati-system, etc.

Keywords : women, violence, rape, dowry, crime.

Introduction : India has crossed sixty-nine years of independence but in this male-dominated society, violence against women has not ceased, but it has gained momentum.

The Delhi gang-rape case is a living testimony to this fact. As per the recent statistics of the National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB), a woman is molested every 24 minutes and is sexually harassed every 40 minutes, raped every 36 minutes, kidnapped every 42 minutes and dowry deaths occur every 100 minutes. It is well known that In India many more cases go unreported due to various reasons such as lack of awareness, fear, shame, long delays in disposal of cases, etc., it is really heartening to acknowledge the fact that in this era of globalization, the state of women in India has not much improved over the years.

Methodology and database : The paper is mainly based on a secondary source. The primary data are collected from the National Crime Records Bureau Statistical Vol-1

Objectives : The aim of this paper is to showcase the different types of violence that are inflicted on women. It tries to find out the reasons behind such violent acts. In the end, the paper aims to suggest some remedial measures to curb this menace.

Discussion : Violence against women is a technical term used to collectively refer to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. The United Nations General Assembly defines “Violence against women” as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including

*Assistant Professor of Political Science, Dr. B.N.D.S. Mahavidyalaya, Hatgobindapur, Purba Bardhaman

threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. “The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of violence against women noted that this violence could be perpetrated by assailants of either gender, family member or even the 'State 'itself’. Worldwide governments and organizations actively work to combat violence against women through a variety of programs. A UN resolution designated 25 November as 'International Day for the Elimination of violence against women. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) states that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men”. In India there exist various legislations for affording protection to women from violence, which include domestic violence and sexual abuse. Some of these are –the Indecent

Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1956, the Dowry Prohibition Act 1964, The Child Marriage Restraint Act 1978, The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1983. The National Commission of Women Act, 1990, appointed the National Commission for Women to enquire whether the safeguards provided to the women are enjoyed by them or not. In spite of the long list of legislation against women, there is an alarming increase in the number of offenses committed against women. As per the recent statistics released by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 16,075 reported rape cases in the country, there were 16078 victims of rape girls children (under 14 years) constituted 12 percent (1970) of the total victims while teenaged girls (14-18 yrs) constituted 24% (3911). Nearly half (7,881, (49%) were in the age group 18-30 yrs) while only 0.4% were over 50 years of age. In as many as 13,504 (84%) case offenders were known to the victims. Of these neighbours were involved in 32% of cases and in 6.3% close relatives were involved. The following statistics by the National Crime Records Bureau illustrate the magnitude of the violence being committed against women under various heads.

Table 1: Incidence and Rate of Cognizable Crimes Against Women under Different Crime Heads and Percentage Changes up to 2001.

SL NO	CRIME HEAD	YEARS						Percentage variation in 2000 over 2001
		1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	
1	Rape	14846	15330	15151	15468	16496	16075	-2.5
2	Kidnapping & Abduction	114877	15617	16351	15962	15023	14645	-2.5
3	Dowry Deaths	5513	6006	6975	6699	6995	6851	-2
4	TORTURE (Cruelty By HUSBAND &Relatives)	35246	36592	41376	43823	45778	49170	7.4
5	Molestation	28939	30764	30959	32311	32940	34124	3.6
6	Sexual Harassment	5671	5796	8054	8858	11024	9746	-11.6
7	Importation Of Girls	182	78	146	1	64	114	78.1
8	Sate Prevention Act	0	1	0	0	0	0	-
9	Immoral Traffic (P) Act	7706	8323	8695	9363	9515	8796	-7.6

10	Indecent Rep Of Women (P) Act	96	73	190	222	6622	1052	58.9
11	Dowry Prohibition Act	2647	2685	3578	3064	2876	3222	12
	TOTAL	115723	121265	131475	135771	141373	143795	1.7

Source : GOI, Crime in India , 2001 National Crime Records Bureau (2003). In India violence against women is primarily divided into three types.

Many forms of criminal violence are committed against women in India. Some of these are as follows. Rape is often described as a social problem. According to the govt. report Crime in India, 0.5 women were raped out of 1 lac between the years 1983 to 1988. We come to know that every 4 hours, 3 were raped and every year 7500 were raped. Ram Ahuja had conducted research on 42 rape victims. He had come to the conclusion that the victim was raped by a known person. 9 out of 10 women were raped because of some sort of created environment. A maid may have been raped by the employer when she was alone at home; a typist had been raped because she stayed behind for overtime, etc. In 85% of cases 1 person is involved, in 21% 2 persons, and 21% more than 2 are involved. 9 out of 10 women fall into the trap created by the culprit. 70% of the cases occur at either at the home of the victim or the victimizer. Most of the victims fall in the age group 15-21 and the culprit's age falls in the category 23-30. Kidnapping implies that when a child is taken away by someone without the consent of the legal guardian and abduction means when a person is taken somewhere either by force or is lured by the person in return for some favors or gifts. From 1983-1988 for every 1 lac women, 2 were kidnapped or abducted. Of the victims 86.5% were women and 13.5% were men. The age group of the victims ranged 18- 30yrs constituted 54%, 35.3 were between 30- 50 yrs and 4.5 were between 18 years and 5.4% were above 50 yrs. Ram Ahuja had studied 41 cases and has come to the conclusion that – the ratio of unmarried women compared to the married was much higher. The kidnapper/abductor had a relationship in the past with the victim. Both knew each other. In the case of abduction, in most cases force was not used. There were 2 causes of abduction 1) Sexual urge. 2) Marriage. In the case of kidnapping, sexual exploitation took place. Excessive discipline enforced by the guardians compels

the wards to run away from home. Every year in India 27-28 thousand murder cases take place. Out of them, 10-15% are women. Ram Ahuja had conducted a study of 33 women who were murdered and had come to the conclusion that. 94% of the victims and the culprit belong to the same family. The age of the murderers ranged from 25-40 years. The victims have known the culprit for more than five years. Almost half of the victims had children. 66% of murders were not pre-meditated. Domestic violence against women has become a global issue with the increase in the number of cases. The term “domestic violence is not exactly defined under Indian laws. The United Nations defines domestic violence as – all acts of gender-based physical psychological and abuse by a family member against women in the family, ranging from simple assaults to aggravated physical battering kidnapping, threats, intimidation, coercion, stalking, humiliating verbal abuse forcible or unlawful entry, arson destruction of property, sexual-violence, marital rape, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation, violation related to exploitation through prostitution, violence against household workers and attempts to commit such acts shall be termed as “domestic violence”. Many types of domestic violence are inflicted on the women of India some are as follows: One of the social evils confronting the Indian Society is the menace of 'dowry' Dowry is an amount or consideration (be it in cash/kind) paid to the from by the bride's family for marriage Social scientists consider dowry as a major reason for increasing domestic violence against women. Some of the facts are of dowry deaths are as follows. Mainly women belonging to the middle class are more in numbers. 70% of the women who had died ranged from age 21-to 24. The women belonging to the higher castes were more in number than the lower castes. Before the death, the women were either insulted or humiliated.

Women are thought not only to accept, but also to rationalize domestic violence and downplay its significance, and so keep their experiences to themselves. This makes violence against women very difficult to study in India. It is found that -i) Mostly women under 25 year's age are beaten by their husbands. ii) When the wife is more than 5 years junior to her husband. iii) The women have no source of income as such. iv) When the husband is under the influence of some sort of intoxication. Women have to face many types of inhuman treatment after the death of their husbands. Some of the features of violence against widows & elderly women are -i) Young widows have to face more humiliation and exploitation. ii) They are deprived of their husband's property. iii) Mostly the family members of her husband inflict humiliation on her. Some of the social violence that a woman has to face are as follows. Female foeticide is the act of aborting a fetus because it is a female. This is a major social problem in India and has cultural connections with the dowry system that is ingrained in/Indian culture despite the fact that it has been prohibited by law since 1961. The trends in population over the century are given as under. The variations in the sex ratio of men and women from 1901 to 2001 are given as under: Thus in India, as per the 2001 Census count, there were 35538909 fewer females in a population of 1,027,015, 24-7 there being 531, 277, 078 males and 495, 738, 169 females. The sex ratio is not only adverse to females but is very low i.e. 943 females per thousand males in 2011. Gender activities express their apprehension that these imbalances if continued to exist may lead to sexual offenses and greater insecurity to women. Teasing Women in different ways is also a type of violence. The incidence of sexual harassment and eve-teasing is not new in India. Cases of sexual harassment are reported from time to time. As per the recent statistics of the National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB), a woman is molested every 24 minutes and is sexually harassed every 40 minutes. The term eve-teasing is used to refer to sexual harassment of women in public places such as the streets, public transportation parks, beaches, and cinema halls. This type of public harassment by a lone man or gang includes verbal assaults such as making passes or

unwelcome sexual jokes, non-verbal assaults, such as showing obscene gestures, winking, whistling, staring, etc. The eve-teasing or sexual harassment of girl students many times discourage the parents from sending their daughters for education and employment. Though there is the provision to punish the offender in the statute books for more than a century it has failed to curb the growing menace. Many of the social customs, for instance, a woman is made to drink the water which washes her husband's feet after marriage, the practice of sati, the system of keeping Devadasis in the temples, etc. very much affect a woman's integrity. These instances of maltreatment against women are primary barriers in the path of establishing human rights for women in India. Article 23(1) of the constitution of India prohibits traffic in human beings and forced labor. The suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act. 1953. was implemented to curb this menace. But in spite of these provisions, women trafficking is still rampant in India. "The Madras Devdasi Prevention of Dedication Act" was implemented to protect the women who were kept in temples/ from sexual exploitation. Causes and consequences of violence against women causes a vital part of understanding a social problem, and a precursor to preventing it is an understanding of what causes it. The reasons behind violence in India can be broadly divided into five heads namely. Sometimes it is seen that the victim has unconsciously aroused or affected the culprit.

Recommendations : Violence against women in India is considered great social malice. This has to be weeded out from society to save the civilization from degrading. Some measures are suggested to curb this evil. The struggle for the protection of the Human Rights of women must go on incessantly. They must not be confined to the constitution only. The men should also join hands with the women in raising their voices against injustices meted out to women. An Administrative unit must be vested with a considerable amount of power to handle the cases of violence against women. The unit must be allowed to function impartially and independently. To ensure that the unit is free from any type of political pressure their appointment, salary, allowances, security of a job, etc. must be sanctioned by the constitutional provisions. To

make the student of schools, colleges, universities, etc aware of the human rights of women, special human rights groups and committees must be set up. They should be given a lesson on Human Rights in the classrooms. The general public must be encouraged to take part in discussions, debates on human rights, every year, "Human Rights Day" must be celebrated.

Conclusion : To conclude, only constitutional provisions, cannot alone, ensure that the rights of the women will not be violated. There is a need to change the mentality of the people. On one hand, where there is the need to encourage women's education, on the other hand, there is the need to raise public opinion on the protection of the human rights of women. Then only it will be possible to eradicate all forms of violence against women, and the promotion of human rights for women will make them sound and secure in this world.

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