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# Problems of Violence against Women in India

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**ABSTRACT:** Violence against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. Given the subordinate status of women, much of gender violence is considered normal and enjoys social sanction. Manifestations of violence include physical aggression, such as blows of varying intensity, burns, attempted hanging, sexual abuse and rape, psychological violence through insults, humiliation, coercion, blackmail, economic or emotional threats, and control over speech and actions. In extreme, but not unknown cases, death is the result. Usually, domestic aggression towards women and girls, due to various reasons remain hidden. Cultural and social factors are interlinked with the development and propagation of violent behaviour. With different processes of socialisation that men and women undergo, men take up stereotyped gender roles of domination and control, whereas women take up that of submission, dependence and respect for authority. A female child grows up with a constant sense of being weak and in need of protection, whether physical social or economic.

**KEYWORDS:** Women, Violence, Physical, Aggression and Psychological.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women can be classified into several categories and these include violence carried out by "individuals" as well as "states". Some of the forms of violence carried out by individuals are: rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, female infanticide, etc; as well as harmful customary or traditional practices such as dowry violence, honor killings, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage. Some forms of violence are inflicted by the state such as war rape, sexual violence and slavery during conflict, forced abortion, violence by the police and authoritative personnel, stoning and flogging. Often crimes like forced prostitution and trafficking in women are perpetrated by organized crime.

Violence against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. Given the subordinate status of women, much of gender violence is considered normal and enjoys social sanction. Manifestations of violence include physical aggression, such as blows of varying intensity, burns, attempted hanging, sexual abuse and rape, psychological violence through insults, humiliation, coercion, blackmail, economic or emotional threats, and control over speech and actions. In extreme, but not unknown cases, death is the result. Usually, domestic aggression towards women and girls, due to various reasons remain hidden.

Cultural and social factors are interlinked with the development and propagation of violent behaviour. With different processes of socialisation that men and women undergo, men take up stereotyped gender roles of domination and control, whereas women take up that of submission, dependence and respect for authority. A female child grows up with a constant sense of being weak and in need of protection, whether physical social or economic. This helplessness has led to her exploitation at almost every stage of life. The family socialises its members to accept hierarchical relations expressed in unequal division of labour between the sexes and power over the allocation of resources. The family and its operational unit is where the child is exposed to gender differences since birth, and in recent times even before birth, in the form of sex-determination tests leading to foeticide and female infanticide. The home, which is supposed to be the most secure place, is where women are most exposed to violence. Violence against women has been clearly defined as a form of discrimination in numerous documents.

According to NCRB data, in 2015, 3,29,243 cases of crimes against women were registered and 3,38,954 cases were registered in 2016. As many as 3,59,849 cases of crime against women were registered across the country in 2017, continuing the upward trend for the third consecutive year, the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data released on Monday showed. In 2015, 3,29,243 cases of crimes against women were registered and 3,38,954 cases were registered in 2016. The cases categorised as crimes against women include murder, rape, dowry death, suicide abetment, acid attack, cruelty against women and kidnapping, etc. According to the NCRB data for 2017, which was released after a delay of more than a year, the maximum cases were registered in Uttar Pradesh (56,011) The country's most populated state. Maharashtra recorded the second-highest number of crimes against women with 31,979 cases, followed by 30,992 in West Bengal, 29,778 in Madhya Pradesh, 25,993 in Rajasthan and 23,082 in Assam, the data

said. Delhi, however, saw a decline in crimes against women for the third straight year. As many as 13,076 FIRs were registered in 2017, down from 15,310 in 2016 and 17,222 in 2015, the NCRB report said. Assam recorded the highest crime rate of 143 in the country in 2017. Crime rate is offences registered per one lakh people. Odisha and Telangana recorded the second-highest crime rate of 94 each, followed by Haryana (88) and Rajasthan (73).

Eight states Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura -- registered crimes against women only in three digits, with not even one per cent contribution to the all-India figures, according to the NCRB data. Among Union Territories, Chandigarh registered 453 cases, followed by 132 in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 147 in Puducherry, 26 in Daman and Diu, 20 in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and only six in Lakshadweep, the data stated.

The NCRB, under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code and special and local laws in the country.

Domestic violence against women is the top gender-related crime, while there has been a marginal increase in rapes as well as overall crime in the country, according to data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2018.

The number of sedition cases have doubled across the country, as compared to 2016, while civilian deaths due to police action, according to the data, have dropped drastically from 786 in 2017 to 112 in 2018.

The NCRB report also names West Bengal, where the ruling Trinamool Congress is battling a BJP onslaught, as the state that recorded the maximum political killings in 2018.

### **Crime on the Rise:**

According to the data, a total of 50,74,634 cognisable crimes 31,32,954 under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and 19,41,680 under Special & Local Laws (SLL) were registered in 2018. This, the report states, is a 1.3 per cent rise in registration of cases from 2017 when 50,07,044 cases were recorded. The crime rate per lakh population has, however, come down from 388.6 in 2017 to 383.5 in 2018.

“During 2018, registration of cases under IPC have increased by 2.3 per cent whereas SLL crimes have declined by 0.1 per cent over 2017,” the report says. A total of 10,40,046 cases of offences “affecting the human body” were registered, which accounted for 33.2 per cent of total IPC crimes during 2018. Of these, hurt (5,30,076 cases) accounted for maximum cases, followed by cases of causing death by negligence (1,44,031 cases), kidnapping and abduction (1,05,734 cases). The national data on crime was released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) on Monday. The crimes rose from 3,793 per million in 2016 to 3,886 per million in 2017. This means, 100 more crimes took place per million people in 2017 compared to the previous year, though crimes such as murders and rapes have come down. The NCRB comes under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and special and local laws in India.

A few states, in particular, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal showed a decrease in crime rates, but most others continue to see a rise in crimes. Incidents of theft have increased at the fastest rate. In Delhi, the crime rate rose by 8% in a year. This is the fastest rate of growth among all states in India and translates to 11,500 crimes reported.

This is a disturbing trend and continues from the trend observed in the past. Cases of rapes reduced from 63 per million people in 2016, to 52 per million in 2017, but a total of 3.5 lakh cases of crime against women were registered, these include murder, rape, dowry death, suicide abetment, acid attack, cruelty against women and kidnapping, etc.

Based on the data, the highest number of cases was registered in Uttar Pradesh, the country’s most populated state (56,011). Maharashtra is a close second with 31,979 cases, followed by 30,992 in West Bengal, 29,778 in Madhya Pradesh, 25,993 in Rajasthan and 23,082 in Assam. In Delhi, according to the NCRB report, 13,076 FIRs were registered in 2017, which is a decrease from 15,310 in 2016 and 17,222 in 2015

Some positive data comes from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura where the registered crimes against women are only in three digits. This is not even one per cent of the all India figure. Similar trend can be noticed in the Union Territories—Chandigarh registered 453 cases, followed by 132 in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 147 in Puducherry, 26 in Daman and Diu, 20 in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and only six in island territory of Lakshadweep.

The government needs to ensure that laws are enforced and perpetrators of physical, mental, or sexual violence do not remain unpunished. We also need more women representatives in the government. The presence of women at all government levels lead to a better representation of their concerns in policymaking; it is also likely to lead to higher economic growth.

The NCRB data is important because it highlights that the safety of women should continue to be an area of concern for the government. Various multipronged strategies—be it anti-discrimination and gender-based violence legislation, gender awareness campaigns, taking the recourse of judiciary, increasing system accountability, social perception, digital consciousness, strict action against child pornography, safe transport, hostels, safe roads and gender sensitization training, counselling, surveillance and increased crime-control policing—may lead to lower crime rates against women in society

Violence against women in India refer to physical or sexual violence committed against Indian women, typically by a man. Common forms of violence against women in India include acts such as domestic abuse, sexual assault, and murder. In order to be considered violence against women, the act must be committed solely because the victim is female. Most typically, these acts are committed by men as a result of the long-standing gender inequalities present in the country.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Being a recent move, there have been various researches on different aspects of the initiative ranging from the economical to social and ethical dimensions. Some of these researches retrieved through internet searches have been reviewed here.

**Madhurima (1996)** in her intensive study on “Violence against Women: Dynamics of Conjugal Relations” points that Cooperation and conflicts are normal features of familial relationships. However, presences of these features in the intimate relationships create a paradox. The concept of family violence not only ranges from physical assault through psychological abuse to denial of freedom but also involves different network of relationships. Further, one cannot overlook the fact that different familial networks are governed by different normative patterns resulting into differential quality of interpersonal relations between them. Hence it would be problematic to club them together for explicating the nature and quality of interactions between them as well as for analytical purposes.

**Saraswati Mishra (2002)** in her book “Status of Indian women” in her 18th chapter mentioned about violence against women that it remained, indifferent biological and psychological forms, has remained in practice, since thousands of years in India. The root cause of this phenomenon lies in the complete subordination and dependence of women on men in the male-dominated society. In the patriarchal family system, under the Hindu Law, the husband had full right to punish his wife, if she was not behaving according to the social norms, favoring male counterparts, and even according to his own whims and fancies. This act of violence, physical or verbal, was the manifestation of demonstrating and maintaining the authority, when it was challenged.

**Ram Ahuja (2004)** in his intensive study on “Social Problems in India” considers violence against women or domestic violence a major social problem in India. He points out that this problem is not a new problem. Women in the Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as we have written records of social organization and family life. Today women are being gradually recognized as important, powerful and meaningful contributors to the life of men; but till a few decades back, their condition was pitiable.

**Preeti Mishra (2006)** in her intensive study on “Domestic Violence Against Women” talks about how development is there and its increasing day-by-day but violence against women or domestic violence against women instead of decreasing it is increasing. Development is all about protection of human rights of the concerned populations. Domestic violence is the most serious violation of all basic rights that a woman suffers in her own home at the hands of members within her own family. The manifold problems associated with domestic violence have been systematically exposed by data and in depth work undertaken by several people in women’s movement. Domestic violence may take many forms like the main categories are physical, sexual and emotional or psychological; but the classification is fairly crude and there are endless variations within each category.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this paper is descriptive-evaluative method. The study is mainly review based. It is purely supported by secondary source of data, i.e. books, journals, papers and articles and internet

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Violence against women in India is actually more present than it may appear at first glance, as many expressions of violence are not considered crimes, or may otherwise go unreported or undocumented due to certain Indian cultural values and beliefs. These reasons all contribute to India's Gender Inequality Index rating of 0.524 in 2017, putting it in the bottom 20% of ranked countries for that year.

#### **Dowry deaths:**

A dowry death is the murder or suicide of a married woman caused by a dispute over her dowry. In some cases, husbands and in-laws will attempt to extort a greater dowry through continuous harassment and torture which sometimes results in the wife committing suicide, or the exchange of gifts, money, or property upon marriage of a family's daughter.

The majority of these suicides are done through hanging, poisoning or self-immolation. When a dowry death is done by setting the woman on fire, it is called bride burning. Bride burning murder is often set up to appear to be a suicide or accident, sometimes by setting the woman on fire in such a way that it appears she ignited while cooking at a kerosene stove. Dowry is illegal in India, but it is still common practice to give expensive gifts to the groom and his relatives at weddings which are hosted by the family of the bride.

#### **Honor killings:**

An honor killing is a murder of a family member who has been considered to have brought dishonour and shame upon the family. Examples of reasons for honor killings include the refusal to enter an arranged marriage, committing adultery, choosing a partner that the family disapproves of, and becoming a victim of rape. Village caste councils or khap panchayats in certain regions of India regularly pass death sentences for persons who do not follow their diktats on caste or gotra. The volunteer group known as Love Commandos from Delhi, runs a helpline dedicated to rescuing couples who are afraid of violence for marrying outside of caste lines.

The most prominent areas where honor killings occur in India are northern regions. Honor killings are especially seen in Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. Honor killings have notably increased in some Indian states which has led to the Supreme Court of India, in June 2010, issuing notices to both the Indian central government and six states to take preventative measures against honor killings.

Honor killings can also be openly supported by both local villagers and neighbouring villagers. This was the case in September 2013, when a young couple who married after having a love affair were brutally murdered.

#### **Witchcraft-related murders:**

Murders of women accused of witchcraft still occur in India. Poor women, widows, and women from lower castes are most at risk of such killings. Female infanticide and sex-selective abortion Female infanticide is the elected killing of a newborn female child or the termination of a female fetus through sex-selective abortion. In India, there is incentive to have a son, because they offer security to the family in old age and are able to conduct rituals for deceased parents and ancestors. In contrast, daughters are considered to be a social and economic burden. An example of this is dowry. The fear of not being able to pay an acceptable dowry and becoming socially ostracised can lead to female infanticide in poorer families.

Modern medical technology has allowed for the sex of a child to be determined while the child is still a fetus. Once these modern prenatal diagnostic techniques determine the sex of the fetus, families then are able to decide if they would like to abort based on sex. One study found that 7,997 of 8,000 abortions were of female fetuses. The fetal sex determination and sex-selective abortion by medical professionals is now a R.s 1,000 crore (US\$244 million) industry.

The Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act of 1994 (PCPNDT Act 1994) was modified in 2003 in order to target medical professionals. The Act has proven ineffective due to the lack of implementation. Sex-selective abortions have totaled approximately 4.2-12.1 million from 1980-2010. There was a greater increase in the number of sex-selective abortions in the 1990s than the 2000s. Poorer families are responsible for a higher proportion of abortions than wealthier families. Significantly more abortions occur in rural areas versus urban areas when the first child is female.

**Rape:**

Crime rate data per 100,000 women in this map is the broadest definition of crime against women under Indian law. It includes rape, sexual assault, insult to modesty, kidnapping, abduction, cruelty by intimate partner or relatives, trafficking, persecution for dowry, dowry deaths, indecency, and all other crimes listed in Indian Penal Code.

India is considered to be one of the world's most dangerous country for sexual violence against women. Rape is one of the most common crimes in India. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 defines rape as penile and non-penile penetration in bodily orifices of a woman by a man, without the consent of the woman. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, one woman is raped every 20 minutes in India. Incidents of reported rape increased 3% from 2011 to 2012. Incidents of reported incest rape increased 46.8% from 268 cases in 2011 to 392 cases in 2012. Despite its prevalence, rape accounted for 10.9% of reported cases of violence against women in 2016.

Victims of rape are increasingly reporting their rapes and confronting the perpetrators. Women are becoming more independent and educated, which is increasing their likelihood to report their rape. Although rapes are becoming more frequently reported, many go unreported or have the complaint files withdrawn due to the perception of family honour being compromised. Women frequently do not receive justice for their rapes, because police often do not give a fair hearing, and/or medical evidence is often unrecorded which makes it easy for offenders to get away with their crimes under the current laws.

Increased attention in the media and awareness among both Indians and the outside world is both bringing attention to the issue of rape in India and helping empower women to report the crime. After international news reported the gang rape of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus that occurred in Delhi, in December 2012, Delhi experienced a significant increase in reported rapes. The number of reported rapes nearly doubled from 143 reported in January–March 2012 to 359 during the three months after the rape. After the Delhi rape case, Indian media has committed to report each and every rape case.

**Marital rape:**

In India, marital rape is not a criminal offense. India is one of fifty countries that have not yet outlawed marital rape. 20% of Indian men admit to forcing their wives or partners to have sex.

**Marital rape can be classified into one of three types:**

Modesty-related violence against women includes assaults on women with intent to outrage her modesty and insults to the modesty of women. From 2011 to 2012, there was a 5.5% increase in reported assaults on women with intent to outrage her modesty. Madhya Pradesh had 6,655 cases, accounting for 14.7% of the national incidents. From 2011 to 2012, there was a 7.0% increase in reported insults to the modesty of women. Andhra Pradesh had 3,714 cases, accounting for 40.5% of the national accounts, and Maharashtra had 3,714 cases, accounting for 14.1% of the national accounts.

**Domestic Violence:**

Domestic violence is abuse by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as dating, marriage, cohabitation or a familial relationship. Domestic violence is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV). Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, verbal, economic and sexual abuse. Domestic violence can be subtle, coercive or violent. In India, 70% of women are victims of domestic violence.

Uttar Pradesh has been ranked as the worst state for women's security and Madhya Pradesh as the state where rape is most rampant. According to the statistics, while UP registered 59,445 cases of crime against women, Madhya Pradesh registered 5,450 rapes, the maximum in 2018. In all, 3,78,277 cases of crimes against women were reported across the country in 2018. The report, however, states that there has only been a marginal increase in rape cases to 32,632 in 2018 from 32,559 cases in 2017, while the overall number of crimes against women has risen steadily from 3,22,929 in 2016, 3,45,989 in 2017 to around 3,78,277 in 2018. Among union territories, Delhi recorded the highest number of rapes at 1,217 in 2018. The record also shows that domestic violence against women figures as the top category of violence against women in 2018.

**V. CONCLUSION**

These figures from the data make one thing clear—that one half of the population continues to suffer disproportionately and faces the majority of the crimes committed. Women of all ages, religion and caste continue to be the victims of sexual violence and heinous offences ranging from rape, kidnapping, dowry-related deaths, physical and sexual assault to harassment at workplaces, abetment of suicide and indecent representation of women in digital and print media. These crimes act as barriers to their empowerment and establishing equality in terms of gender. This puts a constant constraint on individual and societal development and has heavy economic costs. According to the World

Bank report of 2018, violence against women is estimated to cost countries up to 3.7% of their GDP. This amount is more than double of what most governments spend on education.

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