



NEWSPAPER COVERAGE AND TREATMENT OF SOCIAL CRIMES: A STUDY OF TYPES OF ASSAULTS

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Introduction

The brutal incident of Delhi bus gang rape attracted many youngsters to protest together and who had massively supported the survivor and also raised their voice for a better and just environment for women to survive. The support which started as a protest increased in a short span of time leading in to a social movement by the youths not only in Delhi but also saw a steep rise of protest in other parts of country too. The protester use to gather around India Gate at Delhi (national Capital of India) and March towards presidents house in order to gain attention of sleeping politicians and heads of the country who have the power to amend and bring required changes and suggestions in the law. According to Justice Verma Committee, it is highly unfortunate that such a horrific gang rape leading to the subsequent death of the victim was required to trigger the response by the citizens or government and by all needed for the preservation of the rule of law—the bedrock of a republic democracy.

The justice verma committee was constituted on December 23, 2012, to look into the possible amendments in the criminal laws related to sexual violence against women (Committee report, 2013). The committee (committee report, 2013) requested all the countrymen to give their valuable suggestion for the amendments of sexual violence against women in order so that citizen themselves should participate in the due process of law-making. Also oral consultation for interaction with the representatives of several stakeholders, particularly the women's social action groups, experts in the field, National commission, a group of young lawyers, law graduates and academics who worked around the issue to do the necessary research and studied to bring in the required result for the amendment of the criminal law.

The committee took 30 days to complete the required task and brought several changes in the new anti-rape law by submitting its report and recommendations on 23rd January 2013 to provide safe and dignified environment for the women of India. Based on these recommendations of Justice Verma Committee, Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 2013 was passed by the parliament of India in March 2013 and President Pranab Mukherjee gave his consent on 2nd April 2013. This way Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 deemed to be in force from 3rd February, 2013 and is now considered as one of the stringent anti-rape law in the country until now. Various sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) were revised and amendments were made in the Code of Criminal Procedure (1973), the Indian Evidence Act (1872) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (2012).

The anti-rape law of the country first time witnessed the recognition of some of the sexual deviance. The newly incorporated terms is voyeurism, stalking, disrobing and acid attack added as an offence of violence and is punishable under law. In its ambit definition and punishment given to first time offenders and regular offenders related to rape, sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, disrobing, acid attack and gang rape has been expanded. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 newly inserted section are 354A for Sexual Harassment, 354B for Disrobing, 354C for Voyeurism and 354D for Stalking in the range of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The spurt of sexual crimes is witnessed in Indian society, countrywide. Disturbing social code of society by deviant behaviour is termed as social crime. It is “an anti-social act” (Mowrer, 1959). According to Nisbet (1970), “crimes are the activities which threaten social order, offend morality and endanger person or property”. Nisbet in his definition of crime, points out the phenomenon of social crime disturbing the societal order, including violation of morals which could be a threat to individuals at one level and society at another. He explains this concept with an example that pornographic material (books, films or internet porn) damages the morals of individuals as well as of society.

This new anti-rape law has recognized certain act as ‘social offences’ like sexual harassment, voyeurism and stalking. These new offences are incorporated in to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) with the criminal law (amendment) act, 2013. Delhi police data reveals that in the year 2015 national capital has reported an increase by 20 percent in cases of crime against women from 2014. Of which 27 percent increase is witnessed among registered rape cases. However, molestation cases saw a rise in 2014 with reported 4,179 cases against 3,345 cases in the year 2013. In cases of harassment 1,282 number of cases were registered in 2014 whereas in 2013 only 879 cases of harassment was reported to Delhi police.

Turkowitz (2010) examined the different narratives that the press (newspapers) is constructing about rape and rape victims through content analysis of over 200 news articles from over 30 newspapers around America. The study also explore the



specific ways that newspaper reports or depict instances of sexual assault and rape by searching patterns of familiar storylines, and the different rates at which subtypes of rape were represented.

As media is acknowledge as the major source of information of people or society to build views about various social issues like social crime. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative content analysis of media content may provide with the essential data on ‘what the media is constructing’ and ‘how audiences is perceiving’ such content. The present research analyzes the content, treatment and coverage of these social crimes under the ambit of amended anti-rape law (2013) in two English national dailies i.e. Times of India (TOI) and The Hindu.

Objective

The objective of the study is to ascertain the nature, coverage and treatment of the sexual assault stories especially the newly included sexual crime in the national newspapers. Specifically to identify the type of crime, type of rape and type of assault occurred during the crime. This research paper proposes to explore if resistance is mentioned by the dailies while reporting and what type of these resistance are.

Methodology

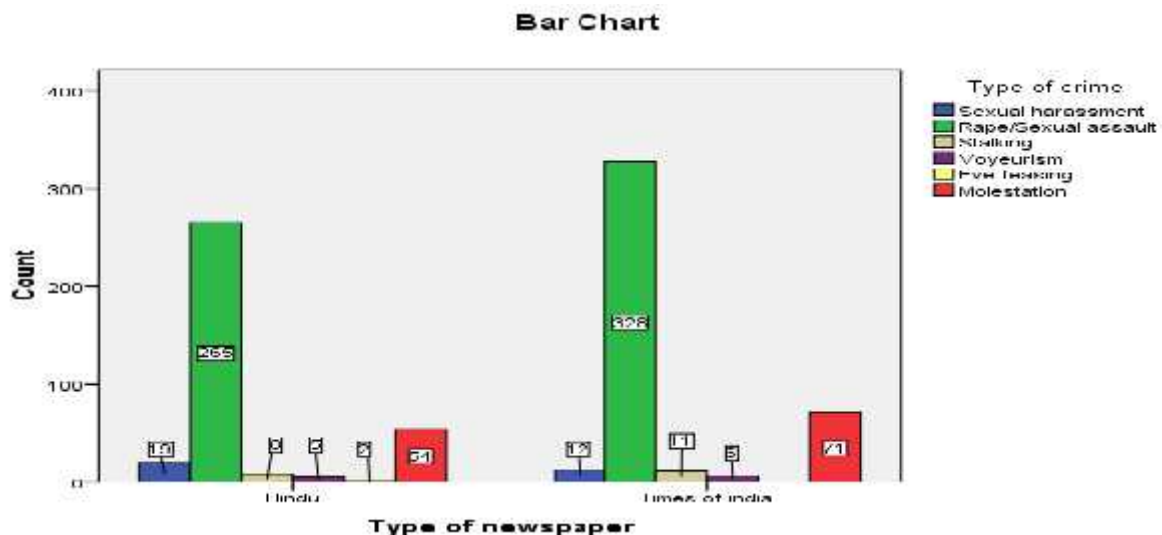
For this research paper, researcher has adopted Content Analysis as a scientific tool for analyzing the data. In content analysis, researcher has examined the artefacts of social crimes against women and its communication through national dailies. Content analysis is an efficient way to investigate the content of the media. Berelson (1952), defined it as “Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”.

This research study will use a quantitative and qualitative content analysis technique for ascertaining the crimes stories its treatment, nature and coverage. For the purpose of this study two English national newspapers namely, The Times of India by the Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. established in 1838 and The Hindu by The Hindu Group started in 1878 were analysed for the period of one year. These two newspapers were selected on the basis of their circulation figures all over India and also the selection is based on the readership figures of these newspapers in the country. This acknowledge the fact that most read English newspapers TOI and The Hindu are suitable for such kind of Media Content research on such a sensitive and alarming issue of sexual crimes against society especially towards women.

These newspapers are analysed for the period one year from April 2013 to March 2014, since the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 came in to force. The hard news published during six days from Monday to Saturday edition/issues of these newspapers for one year on social crime stories are taken as a unit of analysis (excluding advertisement and supplement or other paper with the edition).

The total number of news items identified as hard news is 781 in 437 issues or editions of both the newspaper, out of which 203 issues of ‘The Hindu’ published 353 hard news on social crime stories and 234 issues of ‘The Times of India’ published 428 hard news on social crime stories during this time frame of one year (April 2013- March 2014) after the criminal law amendment act (2013) came in to force. The unit of analysis in this study is the complete.

Result and Discussion





Result

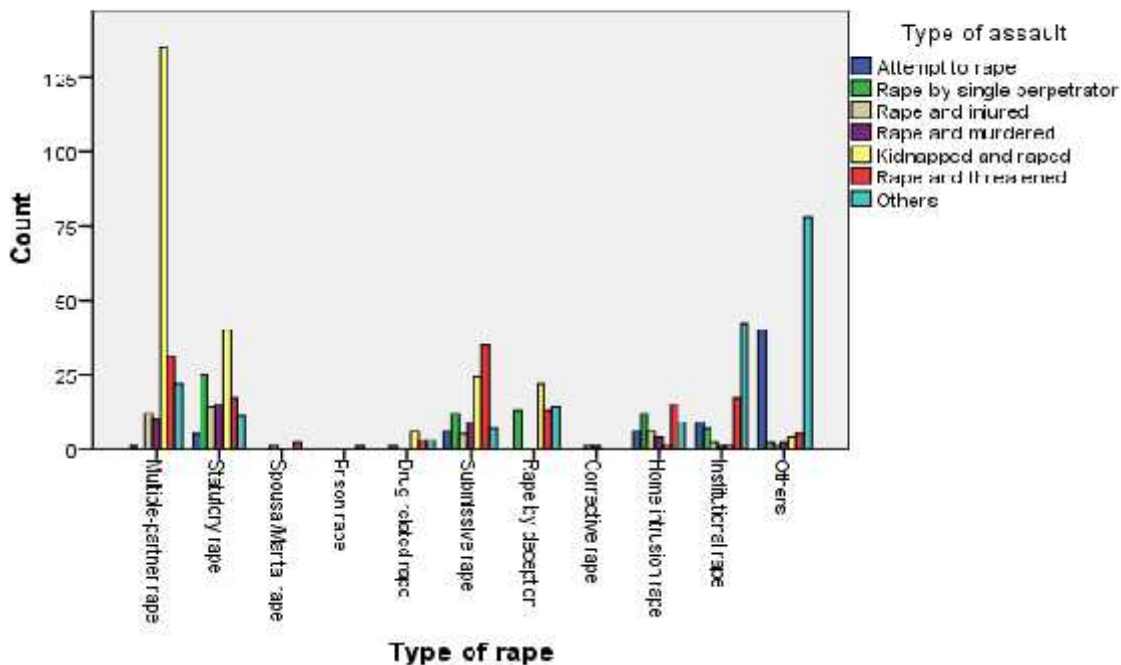
The table in its row classifies the type of newspaper as The Times of India and The Hindu. The column of the table classifies the type of crime as sexual harassment, rape/sexual assault, Stalking, voyeurism, eve-teasing and molestation. The data reveals that the Hindu published three-fourth (75.1%) rape stories, followed by 15.3 percent molestation, 5.4 percent sexual harassment, 2.3 percent stalking, 1.4 percent voyeurism and 0.6 percent eve-teasing news stories. However, the TOI published a little more than three-fourth (76.6%) of the rape news stories, 16.6 percent molestation stories, 2.8 percent sexual harassment, 2.6 percent stalking and 1.4 percent voyeurism.

The result reveals that 61.3 percent of sexual harassment stories are reported in Hindu and 38.7 percent are reported in Times of India while a little less than half i.e. 44.7 percent of the rape/sexual assault stories are published by Hindu and 55.3 percent are published by the Times of India. However in case of stalking 57.9 percent news stories are published by the TOI and 42.1 percent by the Hindu. Whereas social crime stories on voyeurism reported by TOI is 54.5 percent and the Hindu is 45.5 percent. A little more than half (56.8%) of Molestation cases are reported in the TOI and 43.2 percent by the Hindu.

Conclusion

The result exemplifies that both the newspaper has regularly carry rape/sexual assault stories and the least reported crime is eve-teasing and voyeurism. It is interesting to note that only Hindu published social crime stories on eve-teasing. This indicates that only heinous and serious crime which is of grave nature and attracts more attention of the readers such as rape, gang rape and sexual assault are more reported by these newspapers. However, the newly incorporated crimes in the criminal amendment act especially voyeurism, stalking and eve-teasing are scantily reported by them which are more prominent and occurs in regular instances in the society, may be because these crimes are less reported to the police, are not of grave nature and which might not attract readers attention.

Bar Chart



Result

Table 3. Type of rape and type of assault is measured. The rows of the table represents the type of rape classified as multiple partner rape, statutory rape, spousal rape, prison rape, drug-related rape, submissive rape, rape by deception, corrective rape, home intrusion rape, institutional rape and other category of rape. The columns classifies repeated rape experience in categories as yes, repeated rape, no not repeated rape and not comprehensible.

Attempt to rape is highest in 'other' category of type of rapes, followed by 13.4 percent in institutional rape, 9 percent each in submissive rape and home intrusion rape, statutory rape consist of 7.5 percent cases of attempt to rape and it is least found in



multiple partner rape i.e. 1.5 percent. This indicates that the most of the institutional rapes are attempted and resisted by the victims and most of the multiple partner rapes are completed social crime. However, the presence of assault ‘attempt to rape’ is not at all found in other types of rape classification.

The data reveals that a little more than one-third (34.7%) cases of rape is committed by single perpetrator on those victims who are minor, followed by 18.1 percent rape by deception and 16.7 percent submissive and home intrusion each. This means that more than half of the rape by single perpetrator is statutory rape and rape by deception which further clarifies that an offender may fraud or deceit the victim who also may be a minor to fulfil one’s own desired motives. As rape by deception approves fraudulent consent of the victim and statutory rape may be consented or forced approves the rape. The percentage of rape by single perpetrator (34.7%), rape and injured (33.3%), rape and murdered (35.7%) is high among statutory rape from all the types of rape. Also this trend is followed by multiple partner rapes where 28.6 percent victims were injured during assault and 23.8 percent were murdered after sexual assault. The possible reason of such trend could be the resistance by minor during assault leading to injury, sexual force and brutality by gang members and in extreme cases the killing of the victim to hide the crime committed by them.

However, it is important to note that the occurrence of assault kidnapped and raped is highest among gang rape cases (57.9%) and 17.2 percent in statutory rape cases. This signifies that in most of the gang rapes the victim is first kidnapped and then raped by the gang further signifying that this social crime is planned with the dire intention of the gang to commit rape.

Although, assault rape and threatened is highest in 25.2 percent submissive rape, followed by gang rape 22.3 percent, 12.2 percent statutory and institutional rapes. This reveals that meek and docile victims are threatened with dire consequences of being killed or is being blackmailed on the basis of captured obscene images, its dissemination and spoiling image of the victim in the society.

Gang rape is highest among all rape types i.e. 211 followed by statutory rape cases. Least reported type of rape is prison rape with only one case. This indicates that reportage of gang-rape is the highest in newspapers and also kidnapped and raped as an assault is high (233) among all type of assaults. This showcase that multiple partner rape is a socially constructed emerging trend, affecting and disrupting the social harmony and social order in the present society. In addition, it is extremely disturbing to recognise the fact when type of rape and subsequent/repeated rape experience is measured, gang rape is found to be the most repeated social crime i.e. in 45.3 percent cases. This trend is followed by submissive and institutional rape each with almost 11 percent repeated experience case. This explains the phenomenon of subsequent experience of crime where docile and a person attached with an institution is victimized repeatedly.

Table 11: Represents the Cross-Tabulation of the Type of Crime *Victim's and Perpetrator's Relationship

Type of Crime	Victim's & Perpetrator's Relationship			Total
	Acquaintance/ known	Stranger/ unknown	Not Mentioned	
Sexual harassment	24	7	0	31
Rape	349	182	62	593
Stalking	12	7	0	19
Voyeurism	7	3	1	11
Eve-teasing	0	2	0	2
Molestation	64	53	8	125
Total	456	254	71	781

Result

In table 11 the type of social crime and victims and perpetrator relation is measured. the rows of the table classifies types of crime as sexual harassment, rape/sexual assault, stalking, voyeurism, eve-teasing and molestation whereas the columns of the table classifies the victim and perpetrators relationship as acquaintance or known relationship (456), stranger or unknown (254) and not mentioned (71). The table reveals that the acquaintance social crime is highly identified with two-third (76.5%) representation in rape/sexual assault crime and is least present in voyeurism (1.2%). Except eve-teasing all the social crimes witnessed acquaintance relation between the offender and the victim. Also in addition, stranger relation among rape/sexual assault is largely high with 71.7 percent followed by 20.9 percent cases of molestation. However, eve-teasing also marked its presence in stranger crimes with 0.8 percent cases. Other types of crime are in negligible quantity in both acquaintance and



stranger social crimes. In few of the cases of Rape/sexual assault, voyeurism and molestation the relationship between the offender and the victim was not comprehensible.

Conclusion

The table explains the phenomenon of how complicated social life's and social relationship between people leads to the unwanted and unacceptable 'social or sexual crime' in society. It also explains that most of the social crime accomplice's acquaintance culprit (58.4%) and one need to be more careful of known persons than strangers in terms of sexual crime. Although, stranger crimes (32.5%) acknowledges the presence of forcible social crime in society between unknown people.

Table 13: Represents the Cross-Tabulation of the Type of Crime *Resistance Mentioned

Type of Crime	Resistance Mentioned			Total
	Victim Resisted	Victim did not Resisted	Resistance Not Mentioned at all	
Sexual harassment	24	0	7	31
Rape	105	1	487	593
Stalking	14	0	5	19
Voyeurism	8	0	3	11
Eve-teasing	2	0	0	2
Molestation	94	1	30	125
Total	247	2	532	781

Result

In table 13 the type of crime and the resistance mentioned is measured. The row of the table classifies the type of crime as sexual harassment, rape, stalking, voyeurism, eve-teasing and molestation and the columns classifies the resistance mentioned as victim resisted (247), victim did not resisted (2) and resistance not mentioned at all (532). The table describes that in almost all type of crimes except eve-teasing the resistance was not mentioned at all or reported in 68.1 percent cases in newspapers. It was also noticed that more than two-third victims resisted mostly in rape crime i.e. in 42.5 percent cases and molestation 38.1 percent cases. However, the two cases reported where victim did not resisted are one each of rape and molestation.

Conclusion

The results reveals that newspapers generally and mostly do not mention the resistance made by the victim or not. It also explains that victim resist and defends against the unwanted physical contact in mostly rape and molestation cases which may help in avoiding the assault or to make offender understand his/her disinterest towards the act.

Table 14: Depicts the Cross-Tabulation of Type of Crime *Self-Protective Actions/ Resistance

Type of Crime	Self protective actions/resistance					Total
	Forceful Physical	Non- Forceful Physical	Forceful Verbal	Non- Forceful Verbal	Others	
Sexual harassment	10	7	4	3	7	31
Rape	13	25	20	42	493	593
Stalking	9	2	1	2	5	19
Voyeurism	5	2	1	0	3	11
Eve-teasing	1	1	0	0	0	2
Molestation	55	19	17	4	30	125
Total	93	56	43	51	538	781

Result

In table 14 the type of crime and self-protective actions/resistance made is measured. The rows of the table classifies the types of social crime as sexual harassment, rape, stalking, voyeurism, eve-teasing and molestation and the columns of the



table classifies the self-protective action as forceful physical self-protective actions (93), non-forceful physical self-protective actions (56), forceful-verbal self protective actions (43) and non-forceful verbal self protective actions (51) and others category (538). The table reveals that in 69 percent cases either the social crime story not at all mentions the resistance or they are other type of self protective actions. The forceful physical self-protective action is identified maximum in 59 percent reported molestation cases whereas non-forceful physical self protective actions are recognised in 44.6 percent rape cases. Victims resisted with forceful-verbal protective actions in rape cases with 46.5 percent representation and in molestation cases with 40 percent representation. However, in 82.4 percent rape cases victim resisted with non-forceful verbal self-protective actions.

Conclusion

The result discloses that in molestation cases punching, slapping and other physical actions are more promptly used by the victim to resist the molestation bid. But in case of rape, victims are more frequently using the tactics of fleeing to resist the crime. It also acknowledges that forceful physical self protective actions are more useful to resist the social crime as molestation may itself be able to lead to sexual assault/rape which can be resisted with the use of forceful physical self-protective actions. The table also justify that despite the greater use of non-forceful verbal self-protective actions during a rape bid, it was difficult for the victim to evade the sexual crime merely with the help of pleading or begging.

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