

INCREASING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE GLOBALIZED SOCIETY - A GLIMPSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Women are the soft targets of all forms of violence that takes place in society be it war time crimes, communal clashes, domestic violence so on and so forth. With the advent of a new era of liberal policies through globalization, the country has undergone drastic changes in all spheres of social, economic and political spheres. With more and more women entering into job market their economic independence has also been increased and at the same time we are witnessing heinous acts of violence sparing not even a small kind of 2 years to 60 year old women. Such crimes are not only detrimental to the progress of the society but also have grossly violated human rights. The recent Nirbhaya incident, or the attack on Mumbai journalist or the nasty attack on small school going kinds below 5 years have raised questions not only about women's safety but also about the very attitude in which women are looked in society. It is very heartening to say that women have been taken for granted and looked upon as objects of entertainment. In spite of the numerous laws and acts to combat such violence we see that there is a vast increase in such crimes and juveniles involving in it. This article looks into the various angles through which these issues can be understood.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the reasons for the increasing crimes on women
2. To analyses the reasons for increase in crimes in the era of globalization
3. To seek possible answers for crimes against women

Key Words: *Economic, Heinous, Job Market, Journalist, Laws.*

INTRODUCTION

"There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable and never tolerable." (Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon) The advances women have made over the last few years cannot hide the fact that for millions of women life is still very grim. And now even the gains that have been made are under threat¹. Women throughout the world are victims of torture and harassment which has aggravated in this present situation of globalization. The forces of globalization have not only influenced the market economy but also have a deep impact on the cultural sphere. Since globalization is an inevitable outcome of capitalism, its market based economy is sweeping the entire world and has not spared the family also. Due to the economic recession women have become soft targets by not only facing the challenges of globalization like price hike, etc., at the same time disturbed by the growing incidence of violence against them. This has not only deterred the social fabric but also a threat to her very existence; thus leaving her in a miserable state.

HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Matriarchal society did give women some space and honor to live dignifiedly. However, violence against women is not a recent phenomenon but it came into existence since the time women came to be considered as a property of men and the gender roles that were categorized and assigned to men and women.

The United Nations defines 'Violence against women' in 1993 that any form of physical, mental or psychological assault that is bound to cause harm to women². 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 the domination over and discrimination against women and the violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men”. According to noted writer, Vaidehi, violence against women is as old as Ramayana and Mahabharath where in these two epics there are numerous instances when Sita and Draupadi undergo this trauma.

As per recent studies, one of the definite fallouts of globalization and marketization has been growing incidence of domestic violence on women. Globalization has further narrowed down the space available for women by creating social and economic divides that. In East Asia, while national economies grew, the human costs of the gain included continued social stress and fragmentation. Increasing domestic violence, street crime, and suicides have been reported in Malaysia, Thailand, and Korea. In Korea, a hotline for women received an escalating number of calls from women suffering from domestic violence – seven times as many as during the year 1998 (UNDP 1999, 40)³. To quote, a WHO study reports that violence against women exists in epidemic proportions in many countries around the world. The study reports, that domestic violence rates varied between 15 percent of women having been a victim of domestic violence during their lifetimes in Japan to 71 percent in Ethiopia. Previous research has found rates of about 20 percent in the United States and Sweden and 23 percent in Canada and Britain (Researcher, Lori Heise PATH).⁴

In surveys conducted in various countries 10 and 69 percent of women were reported having experienced domestic violence. By region, 10 - 35 percent of women in Latin America and 13-45 percent of women in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced physical intimate partner violence at some time in their lives⁵

Worldwide Statistics

1. 1 in 3 women have been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. Usually the abuser is a member of her own family or someone known to her.
2. Boys who witness their fathers' violence are 10 times more likely to engage in spouse abuse in later adulthood
3. In some parts of the world a girl is more likely to be raped than to learn how to read
4. Every year, 60 million girls are sexually assaulted at, or on their way to, school
5. Women and girls are 80% (640,000) of the estimated 800,000 people trafficked across national borders annually with the majority (505,600) trafficked for sexual exploitation.
6. At least 60 million girls are 'missing' from various populations - mostly in Asia - as a result of infanticide, neglect or sex-selected abortions.
7. Up to 5% of women report being physically abused while pregnant. 50% of physically abused Indian women report violence during pregnancy.
8. Between 100 and 140 million women and girls alive today have been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation. In six African countries over 80% of women have been subject to this practice.
9. Over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides: 31.3 million in South Asia, 14.1 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. Violence and abuse characterize married life for many of these girls. (Source: UN Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, Violence against women, Feb 19, 14)⁶

Indian Position

Indian Women's position is nowhere far better than her western counterparts. From ages traditionally women were at the receiving end and *a woman unable to give birth to a boy child was looked down upon. A girl child was not welcomed as a boy child was.*⁷ and women were confined to the four walls of kitchen with ignorance and tradition making life miserable for women. However with the advent of British Colonial Era, a period which was considered both a boon and a bane to the Indian society, some meaningful changes took place.

The Sati, Child marriage, denial of education to women were prevalent then. But the efforts of Social Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Eshwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyothibha Phule etc., women could see a new light. An era of new dawn was foreseen. After Independence gradually, with the implementation of the Constitution, women’s education also became prominent and the rights were ensured and guaranteed through the fundamental rights (right to equality Art.14-18, right to freedom Art.19-22, Right against exploitation Art.23-24 etc.). All these were desired to achieve the basic objectives of the Constitution. However, after all these days we still find a wide gap in gender equity in almost all sectors of society and the patriarchal mindset has deeply inroded into our society.

According to author and activist Rita Banerjee, within the span of three generations India has systematically targeted and annihilated more than 50 million women from its population. One illustration of this is the skewed sex ratio: the 2011 census found that there are 940 women for every 1000 men, and this national figure hides significant regional discrepancies.⁸ Women are threatened by multiple forms of violence including burnings, acid attacks, beatings and rape.

India’s National Crime Records Bureau reports that registered rape cases in India have increased by almost 900 percent over the past 40 years. However the conviction rates are very meager. 85.1% of rape cases investigated in 2012 was still awaiting trial.⁹ Numbers of trafficked women are also high, and a 2010 report published by the Asia Foundation states that, unusually, 90 percent of India’s trafficking in persons occurs within national borders. Violence against women is perpetrated not only, or even mostly, by strangers but also from agents of the state, spouses and family members.¹⁰

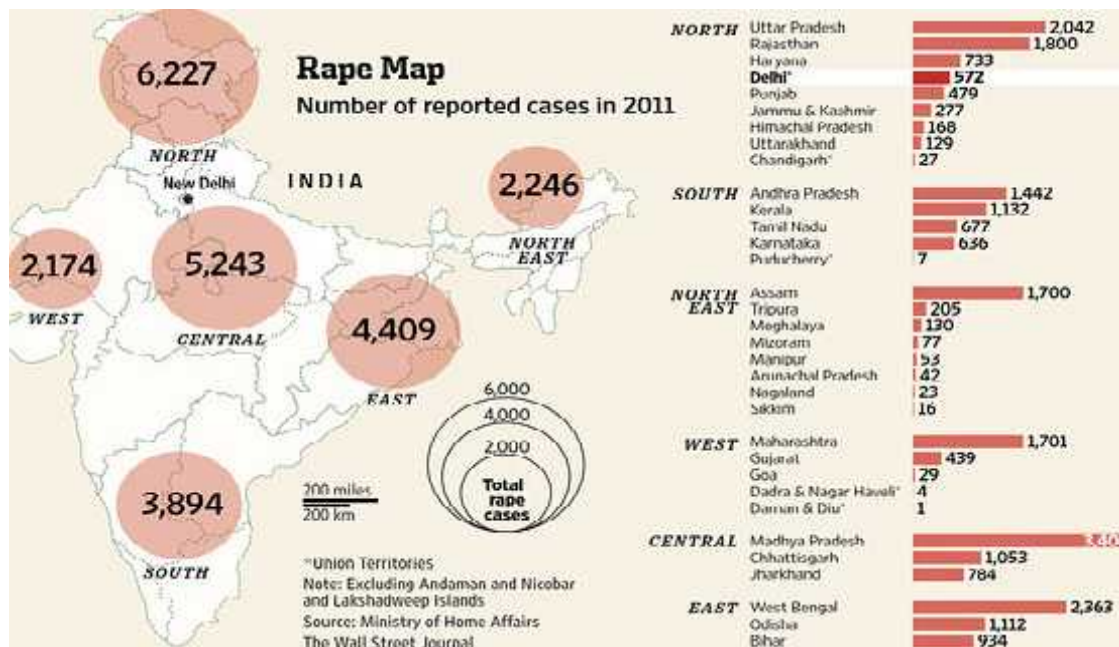
Table:1 Incidence and rate of Cognizable Crimes (IPC) and % change during the years

Crime head	2001	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2013
Rape (Section 376 IPC)	16075 (1.6%)	19348 (1.7%)	20737 (1.8%)	21467 (1.9%)	21397 (1.8%)	22172 (1.9%)	24157 (n.a.)

Source: *Crimes In India*, National Crime record Bureau, GOI, 2013.

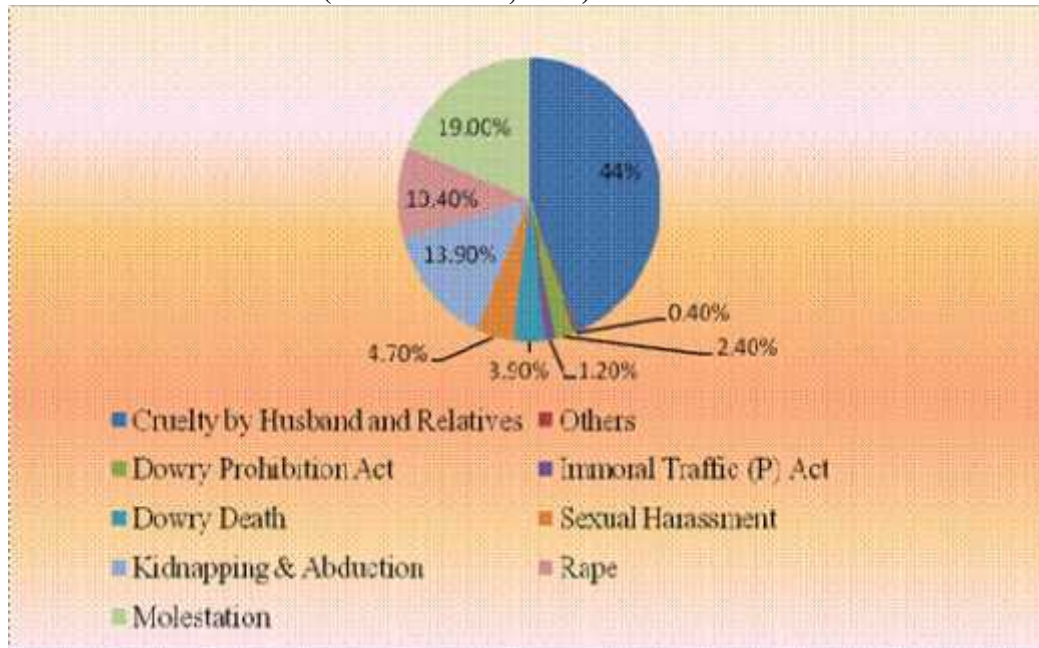
- 8541 minors raped in 2013
- Out of 68,000 cases of rapes during 2009-11, only 11,000 convicted

Fig.1



The Wall Street Journal. A graphic showing the number of rape cases in India in 2011.

Fig.2: Statistics on Crimes on Women: (Source NCRB, 2013)



The above statistics only shows the real picture of the state and position of women. It is unfortunate to note that even in the 21st century women all over the world and India are victims of violence and are continued to be exploited. In India they are vulnerable to all forms of violation even including right to life, liberty and security. They face every type of violence ranging from physical, sexual, religious, cultural, harassment at work place, social and economic deprivation. Even in the days of globalization gender justice remains a debatable issue.

WHY WOMEN ARE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Since the advent of patriarchy women are considered as a property of man they continue to be subjected to all forms of exploitation even in this present situation. The suppression of women is not based on biological factors but on the patriarchal mindset that has in-roaded into the society that has made women to economically remain dependent on men. Hence women's movements all over the world demand the end of patriarchal domination which is regarded as the root cause of gender inequality in society. According to the feminist movements, equality can be ensured only when power structure in society is changed and women are also given equal opportunities in education, employment etc.,

HUMAN RIGHTS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Human Rights movement that gained momentum in post-World War II gradually spread to all the countries and India being a signatory to the UN Declaration of Human Rights had made certain provisions for the protection of rights of women through the various fundamental rights. Numerous laws are enacted to protect women from being harassed, humiliated and exploited. However in spite of these, women's rights seem to be in violation of the constitutional rights guaranteed.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

In spite of the implementation of human rights treaties, Establishment of Human Rights Commission (both in Centre as well as in States), stringent laws, women in India are subjected to economic, social, sexual abuses resulting in violation of her human rights. Hence it is need of the hour to ensure that the laws are strictly enforced

and severe punishment given to the offenders. Gender sensitization of men and women towards issues relating to violence has to be taken up and awareness created in society.

CONCLUSION

Women's emancipation and end to the problems faced by women can be achieved only when women fight for their rights and participate in the social movements. It can neither be achieved by mere solace or by sympathizing women's role in society. Concerted steps have to be taken up to make women confidently participate in social development. "A society that is unable to respect, protect and nurture its women and children loses its moral moorings and runs adrift." (*The Hindu- Opinion Sept, 15 2012*) Hence it is the need of the hour to constantly build our society free from such exploitation.

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