

Women Issues in India

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ABSTRACT

Women status in India has many great changes over the past few millennia. Women in India in the past faced many challenging problems i.e. abortion, dowry, restriction on widow remarriage, gender inequality, neglected during childhood, sexual harassment. During ancient time, many reformers promoted equal status of men and women in India. So, we need to do justice that starts from home. Women upliftment should start at the grassroot level by protecting women from abuses and harassment.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Dowry, Sexual violence, Women issues.

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INTRODUCTION

Past few millenniums in India the women are spacing great changes.¹ From ancient times during medieval period, many reformers were promoted equal rights for both men and women in India.² However, women in India continuously facing violence such as rape, acid throwing, dowry killings, and the forced prostitution of young girls. Sati, Jauhar, and Devadasi practices are banned in modern India. However, these practices are in vogue still in remote parts of India which cause the violence among women in society.³

WOMEN ISSUES

The current status of women in India faced many challenging problems i.e. female abortion, dowry, restriction on widow remarriage, gender inequality, neglected during childhood, and sexual harassment. National-level issues like Mathura rape case and policemen accused of raping a young girl in a police station in 1979–1980 are of serious concerns. Another important legal issue is child marriage which affects female child growth in all aspects in the society.⁴

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Women are victims of domestic violence around 70% in India, according to a Former Union Minister for Women and Child Development reports.⁵ Domestic violence otherwise called intimate partner violence (IPV) in worldwide. Cultural and household factors contributed to the prevalence of domestic violence, and argued that these factors need to be thoroughly addressed through routine screening for warning signs of domestic violence by health professionals, legislation and support and empowerment stemming from women's groups (Table 1).⁶

Reasons for Domestic Violence

Forms of Domestic Violence

Physical injury: The physical injuries are domestic/IPV and include slapping, pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, throwing objects, strangling, beating, threatening with any form of weapon, or using a weapon.⁸ Domestic violence against women is physical and psychological injuries discerned by health professionals and courts of law in the context of legal prosecution.⁹

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Table 1: Reasons for domestic violence

Domestic violence and dowry are interrelated in many community cultural practices in India	Patriarchal structural families in India which response in women violence such as marriage, discrimination and opportunity for independence	Domestic violence is often crime or complaint, private or family matter, Caste, class, religious, race, socioeconomic class, educational level, and family structure ⁷
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Emotional abuse: In recent year, incredible forms of domestic violence and human rights abuse are identified that start from home to society throughout developing nations such as in India. Psychological abuse affects woman's sense of self worth, which is harmful to overall mental and physical well-being.¹⁰

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse is a range of forceful acts including unwanted kissing, touching, or fondling, sexual reproductive coercion, rape and marital rape. Abuse is found to be most common among men who also had extramarital affairs and among whom who had STD symptoms.¹¹

Effects of Domestic Violence

- Physical health issues due to physical, emotional, and sexual forms of domestic violence include physical injury such as lacerations to fractures internal organs injury including unwanted pregnancy, gynecological problems and miscarriage.¹²

- Psychological issues can affect mental health such as depression, fear, anxiety, low self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, suicide, homicide, maternal mortality due to violence.
- Social and economic costs burden to direct results of these public-health consequences.
- Domestic violence has the greater gender inequality in the society.¹³

Measures for Tackling Domestic Violence

The Domestic Violence Act of 2005 provides victims of abuse with practical remedy by prosecution. Under section 3, the Act prescribes stringent punishment for domestic violence. However, the Domestic Violence Act of 2005 has been reportedly used against men in some cases, among majority of cases are abuse of woman.¹⁴

Dowry

The dowry system is economic strata in India which has great responsibility in financial burden on the bride's family. An upper class family is more likely to be engaged in the dowry system than the lower class. Dowry has become a social menace in modern India, and due to its practice, women are subjected to many types of atrocity and harassment, the most brutal and inhumane of which is dowry death.¹⁵ Dowry demand and its inadequate satisfaction is one of the most prominent reasons for domestic violence. Dowry deaths are found in many countries, but India reports the highest total number of dowry deaths in forms of rape, bride burning, and acid throwing.¹⁶

Effects of Dowry System

- Dowry system is a crime against humanity.
- Financial burden on the families because of attributes of dowry system.
- Around 60% of Indian women are suffering from one or another forms of mental disorders due to tortures in their in-laws and husband.
- Conflict and squabble on upbringing and personality development of their female children due to dowry system.¹⁷

Control of Dowry System

- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 in Indian civil law and subsequently by Sections 304B and 498A of Indian Penal Code which prohibits the request for payment or acceptance of a dowry.¹⁸
- United Nations (UN) has played a pivotal role in combating violence against women, including dowry deaths. The United Nations has been an advocate for women's rights since its inception in 1945, explicitly stating so in its Charter's Preamble, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (In 1948 adopted).
- Discrimination against Women in 2012 and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), though predominately focused on improving the quality of education available to children globally, has also taken a proactive stance against dowry death.¹⁹

Sexual Violence among Women in India

Current scenario increasing violence of sexual abuse among women in Indian and public outrage against the apathy by government to

control the situation. Violence, necessarily, is not physical (like rape which is the most brutal form of violence), even include stalking, voyeurism, etc. The safety of women in urban areas is welded to a truly inclusive city that affirms the special needs of all citizens, especially those who are disabled, poor or belong to different ethnicities and participatory decision-making that involves strong partnerships between civil society organizations, governments and urban local authorities.²⁰

Causes of Sexual Violence among Women in India

- Inadequate police patrolling are reasons for increased sexual violence.
- Lack of stringent laws on sexual assault and inefficient criminal justice system.
- Increasing objectification of women by media as an object for sexual satisfaction.
- Inefficient and apathetic attitude of law enforcement agencies
- Patriarchal structure of Indian society.²¹

Action Framework against Sexual Violence

Indian Parliament passed law against sexual violence among women in India with the goal of protecting women from sexual violence. It came in the form of Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, which further amends the Indian Penal Code, which provides Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. The capital law provides punishment for rapes, acid attacks and forcibly disrobing among women. As a beginning we can start with creating favorable urban infrastructure, like proper lighting on the public places, safe and secure urban transportation, installing CCTV cameras at places thought to be prone to sexual violence and special designed courts (Fast Track Courts) for violence against women. The rape of young professional in the capital in a 'secure' taxi has once again forced everyone to reassess the state of public transportation in cities across India and issues related to women's safety. Daily around 40 cases of crimes against women were registered in Delhi police station, including at least four cases of rape, according to government officials. Therefore, it is imperative that measures must be taken for making transportation security and safety design of public transport infrastructure which includes access to public transport stops, the design of the vehicle to become safety and security for travelers. Following is a list of policy interventions.²²

G-Auto model of Ahmedabad: Under this model auto-rickshaws are managed through a common control center to offer safe and reliable service to commuters.

Pink Auto initiative of the Government of Odisha: The pink autos have drivers who have undergone a strict psychological test, criminal background check and training which provide big safety among women in India; this seems like a feasible solution.

- The recent Uber taxi rape incident in Delhi has definitely renewed a deep sense of fear among women commuters across the country.
- In Bhubaneswar, before launching the pink autos for women commuters they did put the drivers through a psychological test, which is really necessary. Besides this, need to hold the monthly orientation meetings with the auto drivers regarding gender violence and sensitivity. Regular interaction will help them to change their mindset toward women commuters.²³

Working Women

Workplace violence usually occurs in a workplace setting; however, it may also occur outside of the work setting. Violence may be perpetrated by a colleague or supervisor, a client or customer. Violence against women in the workplace takes place throughout the world and takes many forms, including sexual harassment and bullying. Women in the workforce take part in employment for earning wages as a part of a modern phenomenon, but growth of payment is better for men than women. Legal and cultural practices restricted women's entry in education and in the workforce.²⁴ When gender is incorporated in analyzes of workplace violence, important issues emerge. These include:

- Women have difficulty in labeling their experiences as violence and harassment
- Women are over-represented in low paid, low status and precarious jobs
- Occupational health and safety research has often viewed women's work as safe work
- Men are more likely to be the perpetrators of violence against women in the workplace²⁵

Providing Safe and Violence-free Environment to Women at Workplace

Harassment and violence faced by women, so there is need of safety in different dimensional to provide and protect the women from violence at workplace.²⁶ The safety categorized under four heads:

Physical: Physical safety and security need for female employees, while they are on job/inside office premises on the job and in office.

Environmental: The environmental standard plays a vital role in ensuring the basic safety for employees.

Organization: It is to create a positive atmosphere at the workplace where a woman is engaged in work, It maintains their dignity, respect and ensures protection from harassment.

Educational: Fundamental tools for women employees of their company policies and protocols without fear, their feeling of security and empowerment.²⁷

CONCLUSION

Our country is on high roads for success, but still woman life is a battle for survival and dignity from her birth to death. Everyday women are dealing with harassment from mild to extreme forms on streets, workplaces, public transportation, and even in homes. So we need to justice at home. Women upliftment should be started at the grassroot level and by protecting women from abuses and harassment.

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