



Dimension of Violence against Women

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ABSTRACT

Violence and abuse affect women from all kinds of backgrounds every day. Sometimes, women are attacked by strangers, but most often they are hurt by people who are close to them.. Violence and abuse against women is a global injustice of alarming proportions. Not only is this problem widely spread geographically, but it is also common among many people making it a typical accepted behaviour. Only in recent years has the issue been brought to the open for concern and study. Incidents such as domestic violence are not isolated individual events, but rather a way for the abuser to command control over the woman. Unlike assaulting a complete stranger, domestic violence occurs in situations when the abuse is a reoccurring formality between abuser and victim. Up until recently abuse of this degree was common, and found in most societies. Violence and abuse can cause terrible physical and emotional pain.

KEYWORDS :

Statistical Report

Violence against women is a worldwide yet still hidden problem. Freedom from the threat of harassment, battering, and sexual assault is a concept that most of us have a hard time imagining because violence is such a deep part of our cultures and our lives. Consider these facts:

- Battering is the leading cause of injury to women aged 15- 44 in the U.S.
- The FBI, which gathers data from law enforcement officials, indicated that 102,555 women were victims of rape in 1990.
- In contrast to the FBI data, the Rape in America study estimates that 683,000 women are raped every year.
- Approximately 50% of the homeless women and children in this country are on the streets because of violence in their homes.
- One-fifth to one-half of U.S. women were sexually abused as children at least once, most of them by an older male relative.

India's international image is commonly tied to its economic performance. It is grouped with China, Russia and Brazil as one of the BRIC emerging economies – though, during a visit in November 2010, U.S. President Barack Obama described the country as 'not just a rising power' but one that has 'already risen.' This optimism was clouded by the findings of a poll conducted by Thomson Reuters in 2011, according to which India is the fourth most dangerous country in the world for women.

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. Women are threatened by multiple forms of violence including burnings, acid attacks, beatings and rape.

According to India's National Crime Records Bureau, registered rape cases in India have increased by almost 900 percent over the past 40 years. 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.

Who is responsible?

Many of us heard from our parents, "Boys will be boys, so girls must take care"--the message being that we can avoid unwanted male attention if only we are careful enough. If anything goes wrong, it must be our fault. Blaming the victim releases the man who commits violence from the responsibility for what he has done. Friends or family may blame the victim in order to feel safe themselves: "She got raped because she walked alone after midnight. I'd never do that, so rape

won't happen to me." Women are not guilty for violence committed by men on our body, mind, and spirit. This violence happens because of men's greater power and their misuse of that power.

Many commentators have argued that the problem is caused by men's underlying attitudes towards women. But placing blame upon men is to miss the point, according to Aisha Zakaria on the blog blackfeminists.org. Zakaria says those working to end gender-based violence in India "are not struggling against a distinct oppressor; rather, we are working to dismantle a deeply held set of beliefs and values held by men and often by women as well."

This opinion is shared by Shivam Vij who posted an article on kafila.org in February 2013, following a visit to the Ravi Das slum colony, where four of the six men accused of the Delhi gang-rape lived. After talking with several women, Vij wrote, "That even the women of the Ravi Das Camp share patriarchal ideas about men and women pointed me towards the thought that the 'collective conscience of society' was what produced their barbarism."

Identifying the cause of the problem

Traditional Hindu beliefs hold that girls should be brought up to be good daughters and later obedient wives. Rita Banerjee writes that docility is a prized characteristic for Indian women. If women deviate from social norms they bring shame not only upon themselves but upon their family and community who respond by stigmatizing and punishing the deviant, often employing violence as a means of social control.

In a recent book entitled "India Dishonoured: Behind a Nation's War on Women," Sunny Hundal discusses various features of Indian culture that foster violence against women. He writes that India's brand of religiosity and ingrained ideas about the "honor" of women "make it particularly difficult to secure the change in attitudes required to address violence against women."

This helps to explain the findings of a recent survey carried out by India's National Commission for Women, which is that 88.9 percent of honor killings are perpetrated by family members. The culturally imposed obligation to keep her family together means that a woman is generally expected to put up with violence from family members. The prevalence of this situation is indicated by the 2011 International Men and Gender Equality Survey, which found that nearly one in four Indian men has committed sexual violence at one point in their lives.

In the broadest sense, violence against women is any violation of a woman's personhood, mental or physical integrity, or freedom of movement through individual acts and societal oppression. It includes all the ways our society objectifies and oppresses women.

Violence against women ranges from sterilization abuse to prescription-drug abuse, pornography, stalking, battering, and rape. It includes the sexual and physical abuse of young girls and the abuse of elders.

Every form of violence threatens all women and limits our ability to make choices about our lives. Sexual violence is particularly insidious because sexual acts are ordinarily and rightly a source of pleasure and communication. It is often unclear to a woman who has been victimized and to society as a whole whether a sexual violation was done out of sexual desire or violent intent or whether these motivations are even distinguishable, because violence itself has come to be seen as sexual or erotic.

Thirty years ago, most forms of violence against women were hidden under a cloak of silence or acceptance. As more and more women talked with each other in the recent wave of the women's movement, it became apparent that violence against us occurs on a massive scale; that no woman is immune; and that family, friends, and public institutions have been cruelly insensitive about it.

Over the past thirty years, women have mobilized to offer direct services to those who have encountered violence, to educate people about the range and nature of male violence against women, and to develop strategies for change. This chapter reflects the important work of some of these women.

Violence Against Women Act(VAMA)

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was the first major law to help government agencies and victim advocates work together to fight domestic violence, sexual assault, and other types of violence against women. It created new punishments for certain crimes and started programs to prevent violence and help victims. Over the years, the law has been expanded to provide more programs and services. Currently, some included items are:

- Violence prevention programs in communities
- Protections for victims who are evicted from their homes because of events related to domestic violence or stalking
- Funding for victim assistance services like rape crisis centers and hotlines
- Programs to meet the needs of immigrant women and women of different races or ethnicities
- Programs and services for victims with disabilities
- Legal aid for survivors of violence
- Services for children and teens

The National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women works to help promote the goals and vision of VAWA. The committee is a joint effort between the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Examples of the committee's efforts include the Community Checklist initiative to make sure each community has domestic violence programs and the Toolkit to End Violence Against Women, which has chapters for specific audiences.

What can be done?

At a fundamental and general level, what is needed, according to a speech made by Congress President Sonia Gandhi on August 29, is a 'social revolution' for empowering women which must seek to reform "the mind-set and old thoughts of our society." Such change cannot be achieved in a courtroom or through mass protest. It requires instilling particular values to boys and girls, at home, at school and in the public sphere. Conceptions of masculinity and femininity must be readjusted to place emphasis upon respect for the self and for others.

This change in mind-set must be accompanied by institutional reform. Antara Dev Sen, columnist for the Asian Age, points out that most victims of violent crimes are brutalized not just by their attacker but thereafter by the system they appeal to or live with. Women in India tend not to appeal to the legal and criminal system because, far from being a source of protection and empowerment, they find that this system makes them even more vulnerable to abuse.

There are stories reported regularly in India's newspapers of soldiers and policemen raping girls and women and facing no legal or professional repercussions. The deep chauvinism that runs through India's

public institutions is apparent from the level of local councils (khaps panchayats) to the highest levels of the judiciary.

India's first female Assistant Solicitor General, Indira Jaising, recently wrote to the country's Chief Justice to protest against remarks made by High Court Justice N Kirubakaran regarding the Delhi gang-rape case, which, according to Jaising, as quoted in the Times of India, were "to the effect that women are responsible for crimes against them."

She pointed out that "no amount of Fast Track Courts and Special Courts will deliver justice to women, if those who hold the high office of a Judge of the High Court hold and express such male chauvinistic views."

Despite these deep-rooted structures of patriarchy, there is plenty within the rich and historical culture of India that not only affirms the value and dignity of women but portrays them as leaders and warriors. Women can be found at the highest levels of almost every area of public life in India, from politics to academia to cinema. India has a long and vibrant history of women's movements, and contemporary women's rights advocates—whilst fighting many long-standing issues—are adeptly using new strategies to go about their work. Now that those accused of the rape and murder of Jyoti Singh Pandey have been tried, and the protestors and their placards have left the streets, the difficult journey towards identifying and changing the inherited prejudices of a collective conscience must continue.

We will continue to teach our daughters to expect equality for themselves and others. We will continue to teach our sons to question sexism and reject violence, to respect women as equals, and to work against all systems that are based on concepts of dominance. We will continue to support one another in protecting ourselves with ingenuity, strength, and pride. We applaud women who say no to male violence, who offer support to a friend, who protect one another, and who survive.

Conclusion:

The top 5 things the world must do to reduce violence against women & girls:

1. Provide women with access to legal representation and opportunities to pursue justice against perpetrators of violence through the formal legal system
2. Promote gender equality in schools and widen access to education for girls. It has been proven time and time again that girls enrolled in school are less likely to be married early and become pregnant. If that weren't reason enough, girls that obtain higher levels of education are more likely to find employment and become empowered as a result of their financial contributions to the family and community
3. End forced early marriage and premature pregnancy, the leading cause of death of girls between 15 to 19 years of age. With more than 142 million girls expected to marry before they turn 18 over the next decade, programs like Apni Beti Apna Dhan (ABAD), which offer conditional cash transfers to incentivize families to delay their daughter's marriages, will likely help reduce arranged marriages and allow girls to develop both physically and mentally before marriage and child-birth
4. Bring greater attention to violence that is perpetrated by a partner or spouse. Stella Mukasa, Director of Gender Violence and Rights at ICRW, told the story of a woman who was forced by her husband to breast feed his dog's litter. When she sought help from the community, her claim was ignored because abuse from a spouse was not considered to be a violation of a woman's rights
5. Revise marriage laws that are institutionally biased against women, particularly those that deny women custody over their children, inheritance, and land rights in cases of death, separation or divorce. The revised national constitution in Kenya is one example that has brought about unprecedented rights for women, including the right to oversee property-related transactions, manage family land and resources and retain a portion of land to live on and cultivate if widowed or divorced.

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