



Women Empowerment: How Much Reality?

KEYWORDS

Empowerment, development, violence, security

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ABSTRACT *Women empowerment is a commonly cited objective of development projects. There is a growing literature on what women's empowerment means, and how it can be facilitated. It is often justified in instrumentalist terms – on the basis that projects may deliver better results if women are 'empowered' to participate. But if we see the flip side of the coin, reality is different still women across the country struggle to live life with dignity. Women are facing problems in every sphere of life whether employment, health facilities, physical security or property rights. Women empowerment is still a distant dream. They are still facing violence in their life. This paper draws attention towards the increasing crime rates against women in our country and need of policy attention to provide them safety and security.*

Introduction

Indian women held a high place of respect in the society as mentioned in Rigveda and other scriptures. Literature has explained about the status of our women and their heroic deeds from the vedic period to the modern times. But later on, because of social, political and economic changes, women lost their status and were relegated to the background. Many evil customs and traditions stepped in which enslaved the women and tied them to the boundaries of the house. The official statistics showed a declining sex-ratio, health status, literacy rate, work participation rate and political participation among women. While on the other hand the spread of social evils like dowry deaths, child marriage, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, exploitation of women workers are rampant in different parts of India. Humiliation, rape, kidnapping, molestation, dowry death, torture, wife-beating etc. have grown up over the years. Violence may be in the form of abuse and includes any sort of physical aggression or misbehaves. When violence is committed at home it becomes domestic violence and involves family members such as

children, spouse, parents or servants. Domestic violence may involve different means such as hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, throwing objects. In broad terms, it includes threats, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, controlling or stalking, passive/covert abuse and economic deprivation, rape, abduction, kidnapping, murder (all cases of criminal violence, dowry death, wife battering, sexual abuse, maltreatment of a widow and for an elderly women (all cases of domestic violence) and eve-teasing, forcing wife/daughter-in-law to go for foeticide, forcing a young widow to commit sati, etc (all cases of social violence), are issues which affect a large section of society.

Types of crimes/ violence;

- RAPE
- KIDNAPPING
- DOWERY
- TORTURE
- MOLESTATION
- SEXUAL HARASSMENT
- ACID ATTACK

Crimes against Women

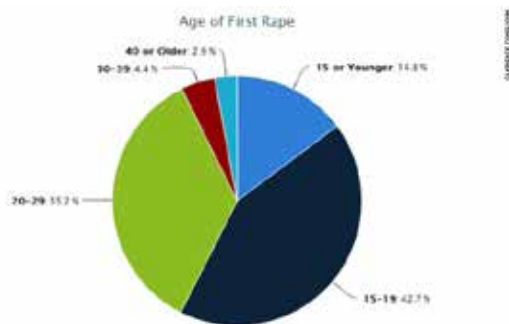
The crimes against women fly directly against orchestrating women empowerment in India. A report on the crimes against women by the National Crime Records Bureau comes up with some alarming statistics:-

Sl No.	Crime Head	Year 2006	Year 2007	Year 2008	Year 2009	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Percentage Variation in 2012 over 2011
1	Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)	19,348	20,737	21,467	21,397	22,172	24,206	24,923	3.0
2	Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363 to 373 IPC)	17,414	20,416	22,939	25,741	29,795	35,565	38,262	7.6
3	Dowry Death (Sec 302/304 IPC)	7,618	8,093	8,172	8,383	8,391	8,618	8,233	-4.5
4	Torture (Sec. 498-A IPC)	63,128	75,930	81,344	89,546	94,041	99,135	1,06,527	7.5
5	Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)	36,617	38,734	40,413	38,711	40,613	42,968	45,351	5.5
6	Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)	9,966	10,950	12,214	11,009	9,961	8,570	9,173	7.0
7	Importation of Girls (Sec. 366-B IPC)	67	61	67	48	36	80	59	-26.3

A total of 2,44,270 incidents of crime against women (both under IPC and SLL) were reported in the country during the year 2012 as compared to 2,28,650 in the year 2011 recording an increase of 6.4% during the year 2012. These crimes have continuously increased during 2008 – 2012 with 1,95,856 cases in the year 2008, 2,03,804 cases in 2009 and 2,13,585 cases in 2010 and 2,28,650 cases in 2011 and 2,44,270 cases in the year 2012.

RAPE

Rape is a type of sexual assault which is initiated by one or more persons against another person without that person's consent. The act may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority or with a person who is incapable of valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, or below the legal age of consent. Violence and rape in particular, is considered the most underreported violent crime the rate of reporting, prosecution and convictions for rape varies considerably in different jurisdictions.



KIDNAPPING AND ABDUCTION

According to the section 359 of the Indian Penal Code, kidnapping is of two kinds --- 1) kidnapping from India, and 2) kidnapping from lawful guardianship.

According to section 360, whoever, conveys any person beyond the limits of India, without the consent of that person or of some person legally authorized to consent on behalf of that person, is said to commit the offence of kidnapping from India.

According to 361 section, whoever takes or entices a minor male under 16 years of age if a male, or under 18 years of age if a female, or any person of unsound mind, out of the keeping of the lawful guardianship of such minor or person of unsound mind, without the consent of such guardian, is said to commit the offence of kidnapping from lawful guardianship.

Section 362 of the IPC explains that whoever, by force compels, or by any deceitful means induces, any person to go from any place, is said to commit the offence of abduction.

DOWRY VIOLENCE

The custom of dowry, is the trigger of many forms of violence against women. Dowry death refers to the phenomenon of women being killed due to disputes regarding dowry. Dowry violence is common in India. In 2011 alone, the National Crime Records Bureau reported 8,618 dowry deaths, while unofficial figures suggest the numbers to be at least three times higher. These cases have increased by 2.7% during the year 2011 over the previous year (8,391 cases). 26.9% of the total such cases reported in the country were reported from Uttar Pradesh (2,322) cases alone

followed by Bihar (1,413 cases) (16.4%). The highest rate of crime (1.4) was reported from Bihar as compared to the National average of 0.7%.

TORTURE

According to United Nations Convention Against Tortureany act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him, information or a confession, punishing him for an act he has committed or is suspected of having committed or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include suffering arising only from, inherent in, or incidental to, lawful sanctions

MOLESTATION

The act of subjecting someone to unwanted or improper sexual advances or activity (especially women or children). Molestation is a kind of a statutory offense that provides that it is a crime to knowingly cause another person to engage in an unwanted sexual act by force or threat

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is abusive and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature, typically in the work place, which may include intimidation or coercion of a sexual nature, or the inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favors. It can be verbal or physical, and often perpetrated by a person in a position of authority against a subordinate.

IMPORTATION OF GIRL FROM FOREIGN COUNTRY

Section 366-B of Indian Penal Code provides that: "Whoever imports into India from any country outside any girl under the age of twenty-one years with intent that she may be, or knowing it to be likely that she will be, forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine."

ACID THROWING

Acid throwing means act of throwing acid onto the body of a person "with the intention of injuring or disfiguring [them] out of jealousy or revenge". Acid used in these attacks are sulfuric, nitric, or hydrochloric. Acids are thrown at their faces for damaging skin tissue, often exposing and sometimes dissolving the bones. The long term consequences of these attacks include blindness and permanent scarring of the face and body. Women and girls are the victims in 75-80% of cases. Acid attacks are often connected to domestic disputes, including dowry disputes, and refusal of a proposition for marriage, or of sexual advances.

RECENT CASES OF ACID ATTACK

May 27, 2012: Two biker youths throw acid on volleyball player Ritu Saini, 18, in busy Prem Nagar Chowk area of Rohtak and speed away

May 23, 2012: Paramjit Kaur, 30, attacked by a man, stated to be her relative, while she was asleep in her house in Kelram village of Kaithal, along with her two children. While she succumbed to her injuries, her 10-year-old son is struggling for life with 35% burns

July 13, 2011: Kiran, 17, dies in Sonipat after two youths on motorcycle throw acid on her for rejecting the mar-

riage proposal of main accused, Sanjay

June 18, 2011: Unknown assailants throw acid on three schoolgirls when they were returning home from tuition classes in Rohtak

February 15, 2011: JyotiAnand, 21, attacked in Ambala by a youth who had been harassing her. The victim was returning home from office, when the accused and his accomplice threw acid on her and fled on motorcycle

STALKING

Stalking is unwanted attention by an individual or group toward another person, often manifested through persistent harassment, intimidation, or following of the victim. Although stalkers are frequently portrayed as being strangers, they are most often known people, such as partners, friends, colleagues or acquaintances. Stalking by partners can be very dangerous, as sometimes it can escalate into severe violence, including murder.

OTHER VIOLENCE AND CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA

Mistreatment of widows

In some parts of the world, widows are subjected to serious forms of abuse, often fueled by traditional practices such as widow inheritance. The sacrifice of widows (such as sati) has been prevalent historically in various cultures (especially in India). Although sati in India is today an almost defunct practice, isolated incidents have occurred in recent years, such as the 1987 sati of RoopKanwar, as well as several incidents in rural areas in 2002, and 2006.

Domestic violence

Around 70% of women in India are victims of domestic violence, according to. National Crime Records Bureau reveal that a crime against a woman is committed every three minutes, a woman is raped every 29 minutes, a dowry death occurs every 77 minutes, and one case of cruelty committed by either the husband or relative of the victim occurs every nine minutes. This all occurs despite the fact that women in India are legally protected from domestic abuse under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

a)Physical violence

Physical injury is the most visible form of domestic violence. It includes slapping, pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, throwing objects, threatening with any form of weapon. Worldwide, the percentage of women who suffer serious injuries as a result of physical domestic violence tends to range from 19% - 55%. Physical injuries against women are more obvious than psychological ones, and can be more easily discerned by health professionals as well as courts of law in the context of legal prosecution.

b)Sexual assault

Sexual assault is another common form of domestic violence in India. It include a range of forceful and non-forceful acts including touching, or fondling; sexual coercion and marital rape. Abuse was most common among men who also had extramarital affairs, and among those who had STD symptoms. In 2013, a court in Mumbai ruled that depriving a woman of sex is a form of cruelty.

c)Emotional abuse

You may feel like if you're not being hurt physically, you are not being abused. But attempts to scare, isolate, or control you also are abuse. They can affect your physical

and emotional well-being. And they often are a sign that physical abuse will follow.

Violence against women at work

Women from all backgrounds are attacked each year at work. Among women, murder is the leading cause of death from a workplace injury. Sometimes women are attacked during a robbery. Usually, though, women are hurt by someone they know, like a co-worker, customer, client, or patient.

Violence against women with disabilities

Research suggests that women with disabilities are more likely to suffer domestic violence and sexual assault than women without disabilities. They report abuse that lasts longer and is more intense than women without disabilities. They are abused by someone they know, such as a partner or family member. In addition they face the risk of abuse by health care providers or caregivers. Caregivers can withhold medicine and assistive devices, such as wheelchairs or braces.

Violence against immigrant and refugee women

An immigrant or refugee woman may face many of the same challenges as any other abused woman. In addition, she may face some unique challenges, such as being accused of leaving or failing her culture and background

PUNISHMENT AND FINES:

CRIMES	PUNISHMENT	FINES
RAPE	10 year	50,000
KIDNAPPING	7 year	At the discretion of the court
DOWERY	5-7 year	15,000
TORTURE	10 year	Shall also be liable for the fine
MOLESTATION	5 year	At the discretion of the court
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	1-3 year	50,000
ACID ATTACK	10 year	10 lac

GOVT. INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN'S PROTECTION

(i) National Commission for Women

In January 1992, the Government set-up this statutory body with a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, review the existing legislation to suggest amendments wherever necessary, etc.

ii) Reservation for Women in Local Self -Government

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Acts passed in 1992 by Parliament ensure one-third of the total seats for women in all elected offices in local bodies whether in rural areas or urban areas.

(iii) The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1991-2000)

The plan of Action is to ensure survival, protection and development of the girl child with the ultimate objective of building up a better future for the girl child.

(iv) National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001

The Department of Women & Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development has prepared a "National Policy for the Empowerment of Women" in the

year 2001. The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women.

Against Acid attack

- The central govt limits the sale of deadly chemicals.
- The government recommends the acid seller to obtain buyer proof of their identity, residential address , phone number etc.
- Government decide to gave compensation of rupees 2 lac.

Against Sexual harassment

- Developing anti-harassment policy
- It made sure that all managers and supervisor understand their responsibility to provide a anti harassment work environment.

Against Rape

- The government took steps by increasing the no. of buses at night and installing a global positioning system on all transport vehicles.
- A three no. helpline with phone no 181 was set up for women in distress.
- Direction were issued for setting up of one stop centre for rape complaints in atleast one hospital in each district of national capital territory region.

Steps Against Dowery System

The person asking for dowery shall be punishable for 6 mnts -5 yr and fine upto 15000 or amount of dowery whichever is less.

CONCLUSION

The women are an important part of our country .they plays a key role in the economic development of the country. Womens must not only give due respect but equal rights and status as that of man because they are big contributors to the growth of nation. A recent slogan that 49% women "BAHUMAT GIRA BHI SKTI HAI AND BNA BHI SKTI HAI"