



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Political Science**

**SITUATIONAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXISTING POLICIES & REALITY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN BARGARH DISTRICT IN ODISHA.**

**KEY WORDS:** Law, Provisions, Women, Violence

**Dr. Binita Panda** M.A., M.Phil, Ph. D Political Science

**ABSTRACT**

The agencies which are responsible for law enforcement have an important role to counter crime against women and girls. The law enforcement agencies may be the judiciary, the police station, different NGOs and government offices etc. they have the responsibility to enforce laws and provisions enunciated by the government. The crime refers to violence which women and girls face every day. It may include physical violence i.e. rape, kidnap, murder, dowry related torture, domestic violence, cyber-crime etc. these crimes or violence can be controlled by the effective and proper law enforcement. To prove someone guilty is a long-term process. It delays in delivering justice starting from the day from which crime is committed until the day justice is served. The situational reality is different from the existing official records. In Bargarh District the percentage of crime rate is high because of the liberal attitude of the officials towards the criminal. It is found in many cases of domestic violence.

**INTRODUCTION**

A human being is born with unrestricted freedom. As a result, everyone has the right to live a free life. But, in the name of religion, honour, family, welfare, and social status, women's freedom is stifled. The harshness of this circumstance is that she must wilfully give up her independence. Somewhere a woman is still getting silenced by another, judged by other, and still being taught hatred. Women have been so oppressed for so long. They 223 believe what men have to say about them and they believe they have to back a man to get the job done. Though Society has advanced into a modern phase but the ugly truth is there still remaining certain conventional practices. For example: the social restrictions which are imposed upon a woman or girls when they are on their periods. They are considered impure and forbidden from worshipping or touching any object of religious importance. Although it is a natural process, menstruation is not a curse not a disease but a welcoming change in girl's life. The very concept being "ideal" in every stage of life is conventionally attached to women's life to a great extent. Unfortunately, an established convention deeply rooted in the society is that a woman must play an ideal role in the family. From the initial life she must be the ideal girl or daughter of the family. Then after marriage she must be an ideal wife and an ideal daughter in law. In the next stage of life, she has to be an ideal mother. Why she has to perform an ideal role to satisfy and please others. Why she has to change her opinion, perception in order to please others? Why she has to sacrifice and compromise herself? Starting from a girl child till old age a woman has to sacrifice and compromise a lot in her life. It is an established belief in the society that she has to maintain the prestige and status of the family. In order to maintain that, she is always under restrictions, forceful obedience and is always in a constant burden or pressure. She has to follow a certain set of rules, procedures and behaviour. Her happiness and freedom happen to be restricted. In the system of marriage prohibitions and prescriptions starts to bound her. In such a situation she is reduced to a state of confusion and has become unaware of her duty to herself. Even if a woman holds a better position than her husband and earns more money, she still has to care for her children and her home in addition to 224 her office work. As a result, she is overburdened. All of these things are usually assumed to be her responsibilities. Every home has a sad and tearful story to tell. Her issues are numerous. Individuality, financial helplessness, political neglect, social exploitation, dowry, purdah, prostitution, child marriage, forced widowhood, mental anguish, abuse, brutality, atrocities, rape, and killings by sadistic spouses are only a few examples.

Every crime or violence against women and girls should be reported in the police station. But in particular, Bargarh district faces unreported sexual violence to a large extent. After a crime the victim either informs her parents or

guardian or goes to file a case against the criminal. The victim registers her case in the police station with a hope to get justice. Many cases of domestic violence in this district have not been registered. The concerned police officer often suggest that the matter is a private issue or dispute and recommends them to compromise the case in a private manner. These attitudes of police officers bring a conscious feeling among the women for which later on they do not file any complaint against it.

It is observed that in the cases of rape the victim has to face harassment in the police station in the name of investigation. It is obvious that after this crime the victim already suffer a lot both physically as well as mentally. While registering the case the victim has to go through the brutal experience all over again and again. In some rural areas if the guilty is found to be a known person to the victim and her family, then the case is decided by the society. In few cases the social pressures force the victim to marry to the criminal without her consent. In such situations the police officers should not get influenced by any social norms, values or pressure. The victim should feel safe and secure in the environment of the police station.

In few cases marital rape has not been considered as a crime or offensive violence against women. Even if the victim report case against it, they do not take it as a matter of serious concern. Sometimes the officers make fun of it and found the victim as guilty. Sometimes the victims face harassment while reporting cases. The support and help which the victim seeks from the police station never gets delivered at the right time. In few cases this matter suppressed out of the fear of lacking victim's prestige in the society. Such situations encourage more crimes or violence against women and girls.

Caste favouritism is seen among the law enforcement agencies. Those who are supposed to protect the victims' rights unbiased are often seemed to showcase favouritism on the basis of caste, creed and religion. In some instances, the victims do not get justice due to sheer negligence of police. Police try to suppress the case due to political pressure; cumbersome paper works as well as getting bribe from accused party. Hence, there is a huge difference between the constitutional assigned 217 duties to the police officers on one hand and the situational reality on the other.

Hygiene constitutes a prime factor in the health condition of women and girls. It is found that the female is more prone to infection as compare to male. Plenty of money has been invested for establishing hospitals by the government. But in reality, focus was majorly given to the infrastructural development only. Inside the hospital it is found unhygienic. All the facilities are limited to paper works only. They are never executed properly. It is very unfortunate situation in this district that starting from the sweeper to the higher authority

of the hospital is involved in corruption in few cases. While visiting few hospitals during the survey it was found that, the hospitals' condition is very miserable. After the delivery of a woman, the surrounding must be clean so as to avoid infection. But in reality, the bed sheets are rarely changed, there is no frequent discard of dustbins, especially toilets remain very dirty which ultimately results in diseases like dengue or malaria.

There is always a disparity between the government hospitals and private hospitals. In many cases in terms of cleanliness the private hospitals are better as compare to the government hospitals. But due to high charges majority of people cannot afford to visit it. While discussing the situational reality of hospitals towards women's health treatment it also includes the attitude and behaviour of the staffs towards the patients.

In rural areas the victims of violence are often faces discrimination in the hospital. Discrimination may be on the ground of caste, creed, class, 218 and race, place of birth or even religion. Due to the scarcity of cabin and bed in hospitals, the lower-class women are often discriminated.

The attitude of doctors along with other staffs of few hospitals is very rude. It is found that they often neglect the health condition of the victim and demand high charges. Due to poverty the patient belongs to the poor family suffer a lot. In some cases, few patients even died due to the negligence of hospital authorities.

Due to lack of inventories like phenyl, DDT, bandage, bleaching, disinfectant etc, and due to pessimist attitude of the sweepers and helpers, the standard of hygiene and cleanliness of washrooms are in poor condition.

Lack of training and experience of frontline healthcare workers is clearly visible from their attitude and handling of patients. Instead of empathy they often show irritation and lack of interest while handling these cases. A little care in such sensitive cases might help the victims to overcome mental trauma. While such scenario is rarely seen in private hospitals, it is commonly visible in government hospitals. This is a classic example for lack of training for ground level health care workers.

The increasing number of working women and girls in district clearly shows their advancement in the society. It not only provides financial independence but also helps in creating their identity in the society. Working places or sectors may refer to government as well as private. Women and girls are no longer excluded from violence or exploitation and discrimination from these sectors. They face violence in the forms of sexual assaults, sexual abuses, inappropriate touch or sign, 219 discriminations etc. it cannot be generalizing that majority of victims who are prone to violence lack education or employment. In this discussion the well-educated, independent, as well as high profile women are also victims of violence in their respective work places.

In many cases of Bargarh District, the working female employees are often the victim of harassment by superiors, or by colleagues. Physical violence not only causes intense damage but mental harassment also causes severe mental trauma. It destroys inner peace, self-confidence, self-respect, as well as the dignity of the victim. It is also observed in few cases that there is inequality or discrimination between male and female employees. Inequality or discrimination here refers to inequality in the number of female employees at the time of recruitment, discrimination at the time of promotion or higher project work or any official tour.

The female employees are disrespected by the male employees only because of their sex. It is a very ridiculous fact that though the society facilitate women with high aspects

still the male dominancy or patriarchal attitude remain the main obstacle before it.

In few workplaces of this district hold the misconception that the male employees can do better justice to their post than the female employees. In this respect the female employees are often deprived of various opportunities even though they deserve it. Moreover, the superiors of few institutions are not at all asking or grant any suggestions from their female employees. The so-called male ego remains the main cause behind this kind of stupidity. One instance may be discussed in this category is that, while interviewing a female employee, interference is 220 found by the male employee. The male employees got insecure of it and continuously interfered in the questionnaire session. The female employee got conscious in front of them and not able to express her views freely. Another example can be considered which is relevant in this aspect is that the girls face sexual harassment while traveling in the bus. Frequently they face violence but do not raise their voice against it out of fear or prestige factor. This is totally unacceptable.

The female employees who are divorced to face many hurdles. In such cases it is observed that they become the easy victim of sexual harassment. But unfortunately, due to poverty, they are bound to continue their job. In many cases the victims do not get proper support from their families, friends, or relatives to stand against it. The root cause of their silence in such situation lies in poor financial condition, cultural forces and prejudices, patriarchal attitude etc. though constitutional provisions stand for their betterment and equality in work places but in reality, they do not enjoy it. The environment of the work place seems to be not safe or secure or even hygiene for the female employees.

Giving priority to address violence against women and girls, the government of Odisha has taken major steps. Keeping in view the issue of safety and security of women, Odisha government provides Mahila and shishu desk at police station, the department of Women and Child Development, Anti-Human Trafficking Units etc. moreover the provision of Odisha Victim Compensation Scheme for victims or survivors from rape and sexual assault. The motto behind these schemes is to strategies gender promotion, effective implementation of provision and law, and to established coordinated response mechanisms to counter 221 violence against women and girls. Unfortunately, the reality is totally different. Besides the existence of committee for the prevention, and prohibition of harassment of women at workplace, women in Bargarh district are still facing it.

The constitutional amendment of 73rd and 74th along with the Odisha Panchayat Acts provisions have paved the way for majority number of women's participation and representation in the urban as well as rural bodies. It also provides fifty percent reservation of seats in these bodies. Moreover, the government of Odisha has promoted different committees to make sure women's maximum number of participations in the decision-making process. They are: Jaanch committees, mothers committees, village education committees, school management committees, village health, sanitation, and nutrition committees etc.

In actual practice the hurdles like illiteracy, discrimination, poor training, societal evil practices hold back women's effective participation. Effective participation and contribution in the governance women need to take their right positions. They do not express their decisions openly or freely. They need to be more politically active and dynamic.

Besides the constitutional provisions for prohibition of dowry act, sexual harassment, discrimination etc, women in real practice of their life are still facing it. No doubt various administrative initiatives have been sensitive to women's

needs, but in real sense whether the efforts are bearing fruit or not. It becomes a question of serious concern. The status of Women in Odisha is a complex issue with many factors like – Poverty, lack of education.

### CONCLUSION

As long as women are not educated, aware of their rights, violence against women can never be reduced. Education can bring changes in the existing social conventions and traditions. It is through the education women will be able to know their rights and privileges in the society. Then only their social, economic, political and health status will improve. Structural inequalities are found to be one of the major hindrances before the enjoyment of women's rights. It offers unfair bias division between different sections of population in a society. Hence, structural inequalities must be declined. Other reasons behind human rights violation of women are gender- hierarchy, patriarchy, caste- class- racial discrimination, unequal distribution of power, opportunities and resources.

### REFERENCES:

1. Afkhami, Mahnaz. (1995), Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights, Syracuse University press, New York.
2. Amnesty International. (1991) Women in the Frontline: Human Rights Violations against Women, Amnesty International, NY.
3. Bedi, Kiran. (2012), Women and Social Dynamics a cross-cultural experience, Women and Society: The Road to Change, Published in India by Oxford University Press.
4. Chang, Das. , (1987) Violence against Women in the family: a national and international perspective. International Journal of Comparative & Applied Criminal Justice, 11:153-7.
5. Cook, Rebecca, J. (ed) (1994), Human Rights of Women: National and International Perspectives, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
6. Devi, Rama. (2012), Role of Women in Social Change, Women and Society: The Road to Change, Published in India by Oxford University Press.
7. Hans Asha. (2014), Scheduled Tribe Women in Odisha. Odisha Review, Nov.
8. K – Uma Devi. (2005), Violence against Women: Human Rights Perspective. New Delhi.
9. Morgaine, Karen. Domestic Violence and Human Rights, Local Challenges to a Universal Framework, Journal of Sociology and Social Work, 34(1), Pp. 109-129, 2007.
10. Naik, Varun and Sahni, Mukesh. (2011), "Women and Human Rights", Crescent Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.
11. Padhi Ranjana and Pradhan Pramodini. (2013), Women in Resistance, struggles in Odisha. Mainstream Weekly, Vol – No – 33, Aug – 3.
12. Patel, Dr. Amrita, Hans, Prof. Asha. (2012), Women of Odisha: Status and Challenges, Odisha Review, February-March.
13. Rath, Navaneeta. (1996), Women in Rural Society, M.D. Publication pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.
14. Reilly, Niamh. (2013), Women's Human Rights, John Wiley and Sons.
15. Sahoo, Ankit Saurav. (2017), Rejuvenating the Status of Women in Odisha: Issues and Challenges, Odisha Review, July, ISSN 0970-8669.
16. Samantary Dr. Jyotirmati. (2005), Human Rights and Women: Introspection. Orissa Review, January.