

## Women Exploitation in Indian modern society

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### ABSTRACT

*In the Indian modern country is fast emerging as a global power but for half of its population, the women across the country, struggle to live life with dignity continues. Although, violence against women, sexual harassment, exploitation to women is not of recent origin, its trace is found in the history of ancient India. Women are facing problems in every sphere of life whether employment, access to health care or property rights. India is fast developing but women's in India continue to be discriminated. They are victims of crime directed specifically at them, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry-related crimes, molestation, sexual harassment, eve-teasing, etc. It is realized that the long run supremacy of male over female in all respect in the patriarchal society in India is highly responsible for arresting the empowerment of women. Women are being trafficked for sex, harassment at workplaces and tortured in family and society. The paper has attempted to find out the Indian perspectives women exploitation in modern society.*

*Recent news of Gang Rape in New Delhi 23 Year Old Woman was raped by 6 people in a Moving Bus in New Delhi in December, 2012. These crimes need to end sexual harassment and violence cannot be tolerated. In spite of constitutional and legal safeguards, the women in India continue to suffer, due to lack of awareness of their rights, illiteracy and oppressive practices and customs. This article attempts to understand the stages and different forms of women exploitation in present society. To suggest Create healthy environment for women and girls everywhere by supporting efforts to end violence against them through the education and make strong laws to punish criminal immediately.*

**Keywords:** Women exploitation, sexual harassment, crime against women, Delhi Gang rape, Indian culture, patriarchy

### INTRODUCTION

Indian woman bearing the torch of cultured living through self-sacrifice, physical and mental endurance, and compassion is waxing eloquence for retrogressive drudgery. It lends rationale for under-nutrition of girls, unequal health care, inequitable access to resources, and denial of property rights all reserved for women born into a tradition that hails women's capacity for forbearance. In the 21st century India is fast emerging as a global power but for half of its population, the women across the country, struggle to live life with dignity continues. Women are facing problems in every sphere of life whether employment, access to health care or property

rights. The attention required is still not being paid to the issues that concern this section of population. On the other hand, India is fast developing but women in India continue to be discriminated. The declining sex ratio in India amply portrays the discrimination shown towards women at the stage of birth. Women may be have stardom in any stream but are getting harassment every day by their surroundings. They are victims of crime directed specifically at them, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry-related crimes, molestation, sexual harassment, eve-teasing, etc. The crimes against women in India are growing at a rampant speed. Women, irrespective of their class, caste and educational status, are not safe. The lack of any serious effort to rectify the weaknesses in dealing with the crimes against women further

In the ancient period, there was more dominance of Gods than Goddesses in almost all respect and in the literatures of Hindu religion like Puranas, a few Goddesses are found as powerful like Shakti (one of the Hindu Goddesses, it has different forms like Durga, Kali etc.). In case of society of the material world at that time, same picture of supremacy of male was found. Devdasi, Widow Burning, Polygamy were the initial aspects of women exploitation. Religion, thus through the making of , Devdasi in temple, exploited women and satisfied the desire of temple authorities. Apparently, it seems that women are being empowered so that they can enable themselves to acquire education, adopt culture and represent as they like in society but it is not true at all if sensed with reality. Let us analyze in brief about male female work participation over two decades from 1981 to 2001, where it is clearly noticed that the rate of female work participation is much lower as compared to men. Another real fact is that, still a new born baby girl is considered as “burden in much case and consequently they are treated with ignorance from childhood. Therefore, they cannot build their capacity and are often suppressed by man folk in the society in subsequent time without any protest due to their inbuilt fear of socio-economic isolation. Some of them without tolerating the exerted force by the men folk choose, dark way of living like prostitution. A significant proportion of them who are not associated with the prostitution are compelled to face harassment and teasing at different times at different place in the form of Rape, Kidnapping, Dowry, Sexual harassment trafficking etc (*Dr. Khokan Kumar Bag, Piyal Basu Roy, March 2012*).

Problem of Unemployment, Poverty, Economic Inequality, Gender discrimination, Lack of Proper Education etc. which are the part and parcel of society, prevail mostly in women. In addition, society has been experiencing that money controls everything. Although gender discrimination has been banned by the constitution and women have been guaranteed political equality with men, yet there is a difference between constitutional rights and rights enjoyed in reality by women (Bhuyan and Panigrahy, 2006). The Government of India had ushered in the new millennium by declaring the year 2001 as 'Women's Empowerment Year' to focus on a vision 'where women are equal partners like men'. Government policy has been to promote women's participation in political, social and economic life of the nation and identical access to healthcare, quality education, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc. The objective has been also to strengthen legal system aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and changing the societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women. Consequently, single or in a group of people has been using women and women also to torture, harassing and exploiting the women in different forms in present society. Moreover, in women daily life lack of the women respect and lack of the

financial empowerment and patriarchal system is responsible for exploitation of women in present society.

### OBJECTIVES: THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER AS FOLLOWS

1. To examine the stages of women exploitation.
2. To understand the different forms of women exploitation in present society.
3. To know the Indian penal and special local laws of crimes against women
4. To provide some suggestion to overcome of these issues.

**Meaning Exploitation:** An act that exploits or victimizes someone (treats them unfairly)"capitalistic exploitation of the working class"; "paying Blacks less and charging them more is a form of victimization".

**Meaning of Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Sexual harassment is "unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is severe or pervasive and affects working conditions or creates a hostile work environment."

### EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Incidences like sexual abuse by near relatives, co-habitation with near or dear friends and subsequent decline of marriages and issues relating to illegal pregnancy etc. are the real fact, the information of which remains mostly in darkness. In addition, girl students molested by teachers or repeated sexual abuse by antisocial activists are also an unfortunate reality. Women exploitation in the form of physical and mental torture on wives by husband is also common, mostly where women are simply a house wife and not associated with any employment. As a result, they are compelled to keep their head down in a speechless manner tolerating the cruelty of their husband helplessly. This ultimately makes them mentally disordered for which they often take the shelter of suicide or other means of malpractices that result very disgraceful, social, moral, ethical, and after all economic support to them (Dr. Khokan Kumar Bag, Piyal Basu Roy, March 2012).

With the passage of time, days and society, there are a lot of movements relating to this exploitation of women but still men are forward in status as compared to women and Indian society is male dominated where female are being exploited spatially. According to Purana, there was violence against women in ancient India, but there was strong punishment for that offence irrespective of caste (Das, 1990). However, some main aspects of such exploitation may be highlighted as following

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|-------------------------------|---|
| 1) Use of women to earn money | 2) Physical and mental harassment by men in society |
| 3) Trafficking of women       | 4) violence against women                           |

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## STAGES OF WOMEN EXPLOITATION AND PRESENT INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

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In the grip of growing consumerism, violence against women has been rapidly increasing and a legitimate human right issue in connection to their socio-economic stability has got impetus. Trafficking of women is strongly associated with economic disparity as prevailing in the country which brings massive development of women into prostitution (Barry, 1995). Therefore, several researches, systematic investigations are being performed to find out the spatio-temporal variation in this regard to ensure women a dignified life. International research network on violence against women (IRNVAW) has been studying worldwide pattern of such violence to share experiences and formulate strategy implication in this context. Contrary to popular belief, child prostitutes are not primarily children lower socio-economic circumstances but also from families from higher income group (Flowers, 1994).

**Pre-birth stage of women:** If a cyclic concept of women exploitation is assumed for convenience of research, one can identify the stages at which they are being victimized. For example, at the stage pre-birth, despite illegal, sex selective abortion has been taking place, because in many developing countries like India, it is still thought that baby girl would be a burden of a family in future and in rural areas, the same is considered along with the concept that they would not be economically and socially productive as they have not physically

strong like men. Hence, despite employing enough labour force for economic development, women are not paid properly and thus they are economically deprived section of Indian society (Tripathi and Tiwari, 1999). **Infancy stage of women:** At the infancy stage, she is looked after with ignorance particularly in case of education, health care and nutrition. Consequently from the initial stages of development, they remain weak and isolated. This is because of the same reason as stated earlier. Thus, there is a tendency in rural India in particular to over-emphasize on baby boy considering their future probability of application.

**Childhood stage of women:** At the time of childhood, due to constant ignorance, women are victimized in the form of child abuse and trafficking for lucrative business spread all over the world both for labour and sex. Therefore, it cannot be denied that the child labour act of 1986 does not bring remarkable positive impact as the majority of child labour in rural India is female (Tripathy, 2003).

**The adolescence stage of women:** At the stage of adolescence, pitiable form of violence or exploitation is noticed in the form of prostitution, trafficking, early marriage, crime committed against women etc. This is a stage when they become matured, can understand the social and economic bondage and being realized this tyranny, they are either compelled to choose prostitution or unintentionally abused for sex. In addition, being considered as burden, they have to face early marriage very often as decided by their family. Sometimes, this results psychologically disorder among them. Moreover, the young women or teenagers are victimized to satisfy a few gangsters by providing sex and beauty.

**Reproductive stage of women:** At reproductive age, they have to face domestic violence, if get married. Moreover, at this time, they are sexually, psychological and physically tortured by intimate partner or non-partner also. Consequently, homicide is very common as read out in common newspapers in all parts of the country. At the time of elderly, she becomes helpless due to absence of workability or sexual beauty. Consequently, they are again ignored and exploited.



Thus, the history of women life is a garland of stigma or misery. There is no stage at which she gets honour due to their traditional oppressed life lead without protest. Although, this is not true in case of females who are socio- economically established but interestingly some of them intentionally insist men folk of society to do offensive works to live more and more economically comfortable by advertising themselves in naked way in different media. Despite the high level commitment to achieve MDGs, the millennium project report of 2005 states that “gender equality remains an unfulfilled goal”. The report recognizes the need to include specific intervention to address gender inequality (Johnson H, Ollus N & Nevala S, 2008). Therefore, it is a fact that, each and every part of the country of India is being endangered by gender bias significantly which needs immediate careful handling for the sake of human right, otherwise, it is clear that this wound will be acute and the resultant effects as experienced everywhere from rural to urban will damage the synthesis between elements of society (*Dr. Khokan Kumar Bag, Piyal Basu Roy, March 2012*).

### DIFFERENT FORMS OF WOMEN EXPLOITATION IN PRESENT SOCIETY

Exploitation of women are various forms and different natures. It includes crimes involving sexual exploitation for economic gains like prostitution & trafficking, adultery, abduction, rape, wrongful confinement, and murder etc on the one hand and crimes related to women's property like dishonest misappropriation, criminal breach of trust, domestic violence, dowry extortion and outraging the modesty of women etc on the other. These crimes are not only injurious and immoral for the women but for the society as a whole.

**Domestic Violence:** In Indian family the man is the master and women is the inferior and subordinate partner and societal pressure forces women to maintain this status quo. Wife beating is the most prevalent form of violence against women in the Indian society and it is viewed as a general problem of domestic discord.

**Female Infanticide and Feticide:** This is playing a significant role in the low sex ratio in India. Poor families in certain regions of the country sometimes resort to killing baby girls at birth, to avoid an unwanted burden on family resources. Sex selective abortion has also been common in the country. It's dangerous to abort the foetus after 18 weeks of pregnancy and quite harmful for mother too at such a late stage.

**Dowry :** The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 marks the first attempt by the Government of India to recognize dowry as a social evil and to curb its practice. The act was modified with the Dowry Prohibition Amendment Act of 1984, which has again been modified with Dowry Prohibition Bill 1986. Women's organization have played key role in this process of change. The 1961 Act defines dowry and makes the practice of dowry- giving and taking, a punishable offence. Dowry is one of those social evils that no educated woman will own up with pride; still many are adhering to it. Practices of dowry tend to subordinate women in the society.

**Recent news of Gang Rape in New Delhi:** 23 Year Old Woman was raped by 6 people in a Moving Bus in New Delhi in December, 2012. The girl was hospitalized for several days and was also taken to Singapore for advanced Treatment.

**Delhi gang rape victim regains consciousness, next 48 hours critical:** The 23-year-old victim of the brutal gang rape has reportedly regained consciousness at Delhi's Safdarjung hospital where she is being treated for her injuries. NDTV reported that the girl is communicating with doctors and nurses by writing because she is still not in a position to talk. Despite the encouraging signs however, she is still in critical condition, and doctors say that the next 48 hours will be critical (FP Staff Dec 18, 2012, firstpost.com).

**UN Women condemns gang rape of Delhi student:** UN Women expresses indignation and condemns the ghastly gang-rape of the 23-year-old Delhi student, who is critically injured and battling for her life in a New

Delhi hospital. This attack is an attack against all women in India. Violence against women is not a women's issue but a human rights issue. UN Women joins the Government and people of India in recognizing that we need to take tougher action together to change the present reality and culture of impunity. UN Women in India stresses the urgent need to promote and protect the safety of women and girls in India. Every girl and woman should be able to live safely and free of violence. These crimes need to end sexual harassment and violence cannot be tolerated. We urge that political will must translate into concrete action and stronger implementation of already existing laws and regulations. (Anne F Stenhammer, December 20 2012, New Delhi)

**Rape victim and accused relationship in India:** Rape in India has been described by Radha Kumar as one of India's most common crimes against women. Official sources show that rape cases in India has doubled between 2005 and 2021 (Wikipedia). Rape is the fastest growing crime in India compared to murder, robbery and kidnapping. According to the report of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), every 60 minutes, two women are raped in this country. According to the Delhi police report A total of 703 cases of rape were reported in the year 2020. The biggest number of such crimes was reported from neighbours. One-quarter of the victims were minors, 27.9 percent of culprits were known to victims and 28.38 percent were friends and 8.35 from relatives. These figures are underestimations as many incidents go unreported due to fear of stigma and non awareness of rights. There are also the countless cases of eve teasing, indecent gazes, pinching, brushes and comments that infringe upon the rights of women, especially in overcrowded spaces and public transport buses and trains. There is a need for a drastic change in attitudes and mindsets towards such incidents. Poor investigations, harsh cross examination of victims, senseless adjournment of cases and faulty assessment of evidence and furnishing of evidence by victims in presence of culprits are areas that need reforms.

The above table shows Maximum number of rape victim was committed by the known persons such as Neighbours, friends, relatives, employed/co-workers and known persons. Only 3.68% cases were committed by the unknown persons. This table shows women are not safe even their family, neighbours, relatives and known persons in present society.

## **SOME INDIAN PENAL CODE AND SPECIAL LOCAL LAWS OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN**

Police records show high incidence of crimes against women in India. The National Crime Records Bureau reported in 1998 that the growth rate of crimes against women would be higher than the population growth rate by 2010. Earlier, many cases were not registered with the police

due to the social stigma attached to rape and molestation cases. Official statistics show that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of reported crimes against women. Although Women may be victims of any of the general crimes such as 'Murder', 'Robbery', 'Cheating', etc, only the crimes which are directed specifically against Women are characterized as 'Crimes

Against Women'. Various new legislations have been brought and amendments have been made in existing laws with a view to handle these crimes effectively. These are broadly classified under two categories.

#### **(1) The Crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**

- (i) Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)
- (ii) Kidnapping & Abduction for specified purposes (Sec. 363 - 373 IPC)
- (iii) Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)
- (iv) Torture - both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)
- (v) Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC) (vi) Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
- (vii) Importation of girls (upto 21 years of age) (Sec. 366-B IPC)

#### **(2) The Crimes under the Special & Local Laws (SLL)**

Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the emerging requirements. The gender specific laws for which crime statistics are recorded throughout the country are -

- (i) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- (ii) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- (iii) Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- (iv) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987

### **CONCLUSION**

Though the status of women in India, both historically and socially, has been one of the respect and reverence, but the hard truth is that even today, they are struggling for their own identity, shouting for diffusion of their voices and fighting for their own esteem. Every day, they cross among the fears and fraught for individuality. Despite the constitutional guarantee of equality of sexes, rampant discrimination and exploitation of women in India continues. The incidence of dowry deaths, woman sexual harassment, molestation and ill-treatment of women are on increase. It is high time now that women should get a respectable and dignified position in the Indian society. Awareness in the women as well as society should be created and their equal rights should be effectively implemented. Crimes against women should be made punishable and in the era of globalization and with revolution in means of communication and information technology, the media role has become more crucial for women empowerment in Indian modern society. In modern society changes have been taking place in everywhere in almost every field

but to protect honour of women. International Women Day is celebrated, a number of women organizations have been working for women freedom and empowerment. But all of those are external in nature as mentality is the product of society and culture. In the same family, a boy gets more liberty than a girl. Moreover, there is lack of security of girls in Indian society.

In Indian modern society it is very much essential to all women get educated to solve all women issues in any society and in any circumstance, in order to live with honour, Education will only give them strength and societal status. This will increase the women smooth living in modern society. Every woman has a fundamental right to be safe. Protesting injustice, if a woman is able to protest herself with the right and education, then that protest her life becomes miserable. It should be remembered that the socio economic empowerment must be ensured by the nation to minimize the exploitation which can help to improve the status of women. The recent gang rape has created a fear among women, which I think is a very unfortunate and serious thing. The court should consider this fact and a speedy trial resulting into the harshest punishment possible for those animals who are committed the heinous crime, will if not remove that fear, will at least ensure that a person will think before committing such a crime. The fear should be in the mind of the offenders not the innocent people and hope our judiciary will understand the gravity of the situation and will ensure that the correct judgments without taking much time is made. Finally the offender may set free, and the victim may treat as offender in a marvelous India. May god punish the Guilty, that's my prayer.

## SUGGESTION

1. Lack of well-planned educational, economic and social programmes from grass root level is highly responsible for such acute and pitiable scenario of the women in the country. In this context it should be mentioned that women being vulnerable by this sort of negligence are compelled to divert themselves to choose dark route of survival in the form of abused or sexually exploited product of consumption. In most cases, they cannot get justice despite their voices for survival to get rid of violence.
2. We need communities and individuals to be a part of this change in mindsets, attitudes and beliefs. We call on the Government of Delhi and India to do everything in their power to take up radical reforms, ensure justice and reach out with robust public services to make women's lives more safe and secure.
3. Create healthy environment for women and girls everywhere by supporting efforts to end violence against them, bringing them to the center of peace building, advancing their political participation and leadership and increasing their economic empowerment.
4. Create awareness everywhere about women to end exploitation against women and girls through the education and strong social, moral, and cultural values and make strong laws to punish victim immediately in Present Indian society.



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