

A Brief Review on Gender Violence in India

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Abstract:

Gender violence occurs against women precisely because of their gender. Gender -based violence involves power imbalances where, most often, men are the perpetrators and women the victims. Gender violence is very common in India in terms of street sexual harassment, workplace sexual harassment, ICT-related gender violence and gendered political violence, sexually abuse, physical violence, dowry-related abuse, honor killing with women. It is very common in developing countries. This research paper explore the causes and contributing factors of gender - based violence & various effects of gender - based violence on victims and their families, perpetrators and the society as a whole. Secondary data has been used for this study. Data has been collected from the existing research papers, news papers, websites, Census survey report and journals for this study.

Keywords: Gender Violence, ICT, Sexual Harassment, Physical Violence & Domestic Violence.

Introduction: In India females are mostly victims of Gender based violence by the male due to Indian culture, Social norms about the proper roles and responsibilities of men and women. These cultural and social norms socialize males to be aggressive, powerful, unemotional, and controlling, and contribute to a social acceptance of men as dominant. Similarly, expectations of females as passive, nurturing, submissive, and emotional also reinforce women's roles as weak, powerless, and dependent upon men. The socialization of both men and women has resulted in an unequal power relationship between men and women. There are various groups of violence:

Physical violence may include assault, battery, serious injuries or burns etc.

Sexual violence means robbing the dignity of woman not only by indecent behavior but it, may take the extreme form of rape.

Verbal violence defines as indecency or use of abusive and filthy language against a woman other near and dear ones.

Social violence, which includes demeaning, disparaging and humiliating a woman or her parental relatives and friends.

Emotional violence, leading to internal deprivation of love and affection, concern, sympathy and care, it also includes depriving her custody of children.

Financial violence, which means depriving her of financial means and bare necessities of daily life, it also includes taking away the assets, which a woman possesses or earns.

Intellectual violence means denial of rights to take part in decision making and discussion for pressing issues.

Other forms of violence are related to denial of education, access to health facilities, reproductive rights, etc.

According to the International Labor Organization, “in general, the orientation of a culture, or the shared beliefs within a sub -culture, helps define the limits of tolerable behavior. To the extent that society values violence, attaches prestige to violent conduct, or defines violence as normal or legitimate or functional behavior, the values of individuals within that society will develop accordingly. Attitudes of gender inequality are deeply embedded in many cultures and rape, domestic assault and sexual harassment can all be viewed as a violent expression of the cultural norm.

Gender Violence in India: According to the Sharma (2001) have conclude in his study regarding gender violence that Having born as a female child is considered as a curse by some sections of the society in India. A look at the turn of century census explores that there were 972 females per 1000 males in 1901 whereas the figure is 933 females per 1000 males in 2001. Still more significant is that in the 0 - 6 age group there are only 927 girls per 1000 boys. In some Indian states like Punjab the ratio is as low as 793 girls per 1000 boys. According to the study of Patnam (2002) revealed that the status of girls in the labor market is different than the boys and they are considered to be more productive in the household activities. The deep rooted gender bias in the minds of people also leads to more female child labor. Lately the trend of teenaged commercial sex workers among girls has been reported to be on rise. According to a report, there are about 10 million commercially sexually exploited women in India, of which one fifth are under the age of 18 years. Wife battering is the commonest form of abuse worldwide irrespective of class, religion and community. Studies have correlated childhood abuse, alcoholism, unemployment and poverty with the growth of this malaise. In India, there is a tendency to club marital violence under the overall heads of dowry, dowry deaths and dowry violence. However, oppression of wives for bringing inadequate dowry may only be another excuse for using violence against them.

Causes of Gender Based Violence: Many study shows that Gender violence lies in the unequal power relations between women and men, which ensure male dominance over women, and are a characteristic of human societies throughout the world. There are four types of major causes seriously involved behind gender violence.

Causes of Gender Violence

Causes of Gender Violence	
Society	➤ Norms granting men control over female behaviour ➤ Acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict ➤ Notion of masculinity

	linked to dominance, honour and aggression ➤ Rigid Gender Roles
Community	➤ Poverty, low socio-economic status, unemployment ➤ Associating with peers who condone violence ➤ Isolation of women and family
Relationship	➤ Marital Conflict ➤ Male control of wealth and decision-making in the family
Individual preparatory	➤ Witnessing marital violence as a child ➤ Absent or rejecting father ➤ Being abused as a child ➤ Alcohol use

The above given table defined four types of major causes of gender violence. The first type represents the social reasons behind violence as the economic and social environment, including cultural norms. The second type represents the institutions and social structures, both formal and informal, in which relationships are embedded —neighborhood, workplace, social networks, and peer groups. The third type represents the immediate context in which gender - based violence takes place —frequently the family or other intimate or acquaintance relationship. The fourth type represents the biological and personal history that affects an individual's behavior in his/her relationships.

Effects of Gender Violence: The effects of violence are varying widely. Gender-based violence typically has physical, psychological, and social effects. There are some effects of gender based violence are following:

- **Impact on women's health:** These include physical problems as injury, disability, chronic health problems (irritable bowel syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, various chronic pain syndromes, hypertension, etc.) sexual and

reproductive health problems (contracting sexually transmitted diseases spread of HIV/AIDS, high- risk pregnancies, etc.) Death. Psychological effects can be anxiety, fear, mistrust of others, inability to concentrate, loneliness, post-traumatic stress, disorder, depression, suicide, etc. psychosomatic illnesses, withdrawal, alcohol or drug use.

- **Economic and social impact:** Rejection, ostracism and social stigma at community level, Reduced ability to participate in social and economic activities, Acute fear of future violence, which extends beyond the individual survivors to other members in community, Damage to women's confidence resulting in fear of venturing into public spaces (this can often curtail, women's education, which in turn can limit their income -generating opportunities), Increased vulnerability to other types of gender -based violence, Job loss due to absenteeism as a result of violence, Negative impact on women's income generating power.
- **The impact on women's family and dependants:** Divorce, or broken families, babies born with health disorders as a result of violence experienced by the mother during, pregnancy (i.e. premature birth or low birth weight), collateral effects on children who witness violence at home (emotional and behavioral, low self - esteem, nightmares, self - blame, aggression against peers, family members, and property; increased risk of growing up to be either a perpetrator or a victim of violence), Compromised ability of survivor to care for her children (e.g. child malnutrition and neglect due to constraining effect of violence on women's livelihood strategies and their bargaining position in marriage), ambivalent or negative attitudes of a rape survivor towards the resulting child.
- **Impact of violence on the perpetrators:** Sanctioning by community, facing arrest and imprisonment, legal restrictions on seeing their families, divorce, or the breakup of their families, feeling of alienation from their families, minimizing the significance of

violence for which they are responsible, deflecting the responsibility for violence onto their partner and failure to associate it with their relationship, increased tension in the home.

- **Impact of violence on society:** Burden on health and judicial systems, hindrance to economic stability and growth through women's lost productivity, hindrance to women's participation in the development processes and lessening of their contribution to social and economic development, constrained ability of women to respond to rapid social, political, or economic change, breakdown of trust in social relationships.

The Social Dimension of Gender Based Violence in India

A patriarchal society is a culture in which men are assumed to be in charge. Descent and inheritance are paternally traced, and men are generally in control of family resources. This inherently puts women at a social disadvantage.

Women are considered to be the bearers of honour and dignity for their communities. Therefore, an attack against the person of a woman (especially her body) is considered shameful for the community. This aspect is often exploited into a common form of violence in times of conflict, especially when of a communal nature. The Partition, the 2002 Gujarat riots, and the increase in communal incidents in recent years provide numerous examples of women's bodies being used to shame communities.

Women from socioeconomically marginalised groups are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence in India. In 2020 alone, 4,509 cases of rape against Dalit and Scheduled Tribes women were reported. According to a 2011 Minority Rights Group report, "Dalit women are...subject to a 'triple burden of inferiority' based on caste, class and gender." The perpetrators are mainly men from the upper castes, who are "putting [these women] in their places." There continues to be a strong general perception regarding the low status of these communities, giving a certain degree of social acceptance to acts of violence committed against them. Legal provisions for justice, such as the 1989

Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, are inadequately implemented, and justice remains slippery.

At the intersectionality of gender, minority women are discriminated against globally.^[20] Consider, for instance, the reactions to the 2012 Delhi gangrape incident (often referred to as the 'Nirbhaya case') and to the Bilkis Bano case. In both cases, abhorrent acts of sexual violence were committed against women, resulting in severe physical and psychological trauma. The Delhi case became a moment of national unification against sexual violence, and the perpetrators were caught, tried, and punished in proper accordance with the nature of their crimes. On the other hand, coloured by the religious riots, the Bilkis Bano case did not see a just end, with the perpetrators freed after merely 14 years in prison.

The notion of honour also manifests in killings done in the name of preserving family dignity in instances of inter-religious or inter-caste marriages. Despite the prevalence of this practice, commonly termed as honour killings, there is no national legislation against it.

Additionally, social stigma and shame surrounding survivors of sexual violence is deeply entrenched in Indian society. Survivors and their families frequently face further victimisation and even social rejection, especially in remote areas. Survivors are often blamed for the assault and viewed as 'damaged goods'. The fear of such stigmatisation results in extremely low reporting rates for assault. This is characteristic of the rape culture pervasive in India. Rape culture can be defined as a setting in which rape is normalised due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality. Sociologists commonly attribute various behaviours associated with rape culture, including victim blaming, slut-shaming, sexual objectification, trivialising of the matter, and the denial of a widespread problem.

In the same vein, divorced women are considered deviant and face social stigma, due to which families may often encourage women to stay in abusive relationships. The absence of social support, a lack of awareness regarding legal rights, and financial dependence on a male figure (husband or father)

further complicate the issue, while the invasive scrutiny of survivors who come forward makes it difficult to access justice.

Patriarchy is well-reflected in the language of the laws that govern Indian society. There is a focus on the gender binary, where all references made in criminal codes in terms of individuals only address *man* and *woman*, institutionally refusing to acknowledge the violence faced by people elsewhere on the gender spectrum. Similarly, there is a heavy categorisation of females as victims and males as perpetrators. For example, Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) classifies only women as victims of rape. This focus perpetuates patriarchal gender roles, which, when coupled with the existing social norms, inherently put women (and minorities) in positions of disadvantage. Until its decriminalisation in 2018, Section 497 of IPC on adultery allowed for a husband to bring charges against the man with whom the wife was having an affair, but not vice versa, essentially treating the woman as a man's property.

Patriarchy even prevents bold legal changes from being entirely effective. Many of the traditional practices that are now outlawed continue to persist, particularly in remote areas of the country where female education is less common. Principal among these is the practice of child marriage. According to the 2019-21 National Family Health Survey, child marriages account for about 24 percent of all marriages in India. Therefore, a shift in collective thinking and perceptions is essential to drive long-term and sustainable improvement in India's fight against Gender Based Violence.

Suggestions:

- According to this study gender based violence is highly involved in India with the women because of its traditional culture and social norms regarding differences between males and females. Its impact is very negative for the female's conditions and as well society. Until Indian thinking will not be change towards gender based system, we will never overcome with this problem. Society & government both

have to take some major steps to come out with this problem.

- Society has to change in the perception towards the women because threat to male authority is the main cause of domestic violence not only in the developing world but also the developed.
- Increasing Awareness about gender biases because violence against women is primarily a gender issue.
- Non Government Organizations and government agencies such as National Commission for women may play an important role in sensitizing the society about gender rights, imparting legal education to the girls at high school or secondary school level, enabling them to fight for their rights. Educating the women about their right.
- Government should implement strict legal provisions of the legislation, which are meant for the protection of women.
- Government should develop programs to make the women morally strong or empowered because, bestowing judicial rights or making women literate alone can never end the violence against them.

Conclusion

The outcome of gender-based violence in India is long-lasting for its victims and rampant for the often inadequate responses. Hence, it is crucial to maintain the sense of urgency in gender based violence cases, even during crisis situations. It is maintained that there is a need for a holistic response model to deal with the issue of gender-based violence during current and possible future pandemics. Health professionals, media, and community efforts must be combined to effectively deal with the issue of gender-based violence. Moreover, continuous and rigorous efforts are required to end the stigma associated with gender-based violence in India.

Gender-based violence in India includes eliminating the institutional hurdles facing women, which leads to secondary victimization. When women seek help, they are treated with hostility or negligent or discriminatory fashion by officials in charge of supporting them. The obvious progress made in the

region in extending women's formal rights has yet to lead to a practical application of those rights on a day-to-day basis, either within or outside the justice administration sphere. Therefore, it is essential for society's response to the phenomenon to urge governments to deepen their reforms and pay attention to the different aspects of gender-based violence in India.

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