

Prevention of Crimes Against Women

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Indian society has always revered women. In Hinduism, man and woman represent the two halves of the divine body. On the darker side, the patriarchal system has continued since the time of Rig Veda. Customs and values were made by men to favour men. Women suffer this discrimination in silence.

The United Nations defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm of suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

Crime against women is on national agenda. Government is making frantic efforts to find solutions..The world has entered into a new millennium, but from the dawn of civilization till date, the women of the patriarchal society of India continue to be oppressed and ill- treated. She is dependent, weak, exploited and faces gender discrimination in every sphere of life. The gender-based violence that threatens the well-being, dignity and rights of women, extends across social, cultural, economic and regional boundaries.

Crime against women and girls is rooted in gender-based discrimination and social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence given the devastating effect violence has on women, efforts have mainly focused on responses and services for survivors, however, the best way to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place addressing its root and structural causes.

A vital part of understanding a social problem, and a precursor to preventing it, is an understanding of what causes it. Research on the causes of crime against women has consisted of two lines of inquiry: examination of the characteristics that influence the behavior of offenders and consideration of whether some women have a heightened vulnerability to victimization. Research has sought casual factors at various levels of analysis, including individual, dyadic, institutional and social.

Crime against women particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence is a major public health problem and a violation of women’s human rights. Global estimates published by WHO indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) of woman worldwide have experienced either physical and / or sexual intimate partner violence or non partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Violence can negatively affect woman’s physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health and many increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.

Violence against women occurs throughout the life cycle from pre-birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood to senescence. Most of the date is believed to be unreliable as many cases go unreported.

One of the Causes of crime against women in India is psychiatric morbidity, where alcohols place a major role. Regular consumption of alcohol by the husband has been strongly associated with poor mental health of women. Alcohol has consistently emerged as a risk marker for partner violence that is especially consistent across a range of settings for all types of violence. There is evidence from many forensic cases (Bobbit, Manu Sharma, Nirbhaya etc..) that alcohol was the common denominator in violence against women.

The socio demographic factors also have been reported to be associated with violence against women. Patriarch has been cited as the main cause of violence against women. Early years and young age illiteracy, coupled with low level of education, poor socioeconomic status, women with no income of their own and urban domicile have been cited as risk factors for domestic violence. Woman engaged in farming, small business or daily wage labour were more likely to be abused then woman who were housewives or who had occupational status equal to that of the husbands.

The family factors make another reason for crimes against women. Exposure to harsh physical discipline during childhood witnessing the father beating the mother during childhood is a predictor of victimization and perpetration for violence against his wife in adulthood. On the other hand childlessness, longer marital duration, having more children, extended family and large family size have been associated with victimization and perpetration of domestic violence. Gender inequality and norms on acceptability of violence against women are also a root cause of crime against women.

Modernization along with late marriages is turning out to be a reason for crime against woman. Modern styles of living and rapid technological advances have also been blamed. Mobiles, iPod, televisions, computers intent have become the order of the day. Women are moving out of the houses more freely and there is there is free mixing of the two genders. "Fashion, drink, dine and make merry" culture is being promoted amongst the youth. Pornography easily available on internet is portraying material for making fast money, which ultimately leads to cyber crime by the youth. There is much debate over how much influence evolutionary factors have on modern human beings. Even those who favour evolutionary explanation acknowledge that additional factors are necessary to explain sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

Though the communitys' respond to these crimes against women there is yet a far way to go. A few women –initiated community level responses to domestic violence are praise worthy. The Nari Adalat and Sahara sang initiatives have been organized by the department of education's Mahila Samakya Program in two districts of Uttar Pradesh and Gujrat. The ICRW conducted a television program in four channels entitled "Bol", it created awareness among women.

The national commission for women was set up as a statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women. It recommended remedial legislative measures; facilitate redress of grievances and advice the government on all policy matters affecting women.

Legislation by itself would not suffice because crime against women is a deep rooted social problem. It is worth quoting late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who remarked; "Legislation cannot by itself normally solve deep rooted social problems. One has to approach them in other ways too, but legislation is necessary and essential and hence that it may given that push and have educative factors, as well as the legal sanctions behind it, which help public opinion to be given a certain shape'.

Women cannot solve the problems by themselves. Women should understand men and men should understand women. Both should work together to eradicate the menace...

