

Women Safety: Is it a Mere Dream?

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Abstract

There is a very famous quote which says, 'Behind every successful man there is a woman'; how many people believe this and how many actually owe their success to a woman in their life. Rather there are so many who blame their failures on the woman. Women are strong pillars of the society and without them there would be no way in which the world would be a better place. If these pillars at any time are hampered or shaken the entire society would have to face the consequences.

When we talk about women in our Indian society; the very first word which comes to our minds is her safety. How many women feel safe in India and how many feel that women can survive in this society without any self-defence training. The status of women has been subject to many changes over the past few years. Constitution of India promises us with equal rights at every stage but is it just in the books or is it actually practiced, is a question mark.

According to the research findings the women in Mumbai still feel unsafe after a certain time. Many females are of the opinion that giving credit for man's success is secondary; they do not even get the basic respect in their own houses for which they long for. Be it houses, organisations or even public transport women are of the opinion that they do not feel safe. Most of the women further stated that they do not have any confidence in the legal system where till date no rapist is given a death sentence or any severe punishment. The legal system should be strong enough that a male should before performing any crime against a woman should fear the punishment.

Keywords: Women, Indian society, Legal system

Introduction

Since ancient times woman power is worshiped in India. Be it in the name of Durga or Saraswati or even Devi. India is a land where many Goddesses reside. But in the real sense do we actually respect them and treat them equal to God. In today's 21st century the crimes against females have increased to an extent we cannot imagine. It is not only crimes but the status of Indian women has dropped in our society. Where woman once

was treated as a supreme power (in Mahabharata and Ramayana) they are now treated nothing more than a mere helper who is meant to do household work.

Traditionally, role of an Indian woman was well defined and had a fourfold status as a daughter, wife, homemaker and a mother. The woman, whose role and status was well defined and almost fixed in the society, is now experiencing far-reaching changes. She has her foot in each and every field and she has now shown that she's just not a competitor but a winner in all possible fields. They all are actively participating in social, economic or political field. Increased awareness and education has encouraged women to come out of their four walls of their home. The modern woman has started caring for her health, figure, cultural needs and interests, academic pursuits, social intercourse, recreational needs, etc.

After achieving such heights such heights and success women still face the fear of insecurity in their life. This fear is the result of weak law and order. There are several laws which are made for women safety and equality but the implementation of the same is far from reality. **The recent acts or laws which were passed for women safety or protection of their rights are:**

1. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
2. Dowry Protection Act, 1961
3. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013
4. Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
5. Improper Police Procedure
6. Domestic Violence (Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code-IPC)
7. Protection of Rights on Marriage Bill, 2017 (Triple Talaq)
8. The Criminal Law Act, 2013 (Nirbhaya Act) and many more.

The statics for female injustice has always kept rising year after year rather every minute there is a female who is getting sexually abused in some or the other part of India and only 20% of these cases are reported to the police and hardly few of them get their cases heard in the court of law. There are so many females who are forced into trafficking and exploiting them. There are laws which are made for the same but again is it just for the books or reality is the question we need to ask ourselves. Due to the increasing number of rape cases the Indian legal system has expanded or rather changed the definition of Rape in IPC under section 375. The definition is broadly worded with acts like penetration of penis, or any object or any part of body to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of another person or making another person do so, applies of mouth or touching private parts constitutes the offence of sexual assault. The section has also clarified that penetration means "penetration to any extent", and lack of physical resistance is immaterial for constituting an offence.

The above definition is a witness to the fact that the legal system has made provisions for the most heinous activities against women but how many women are aware about the same. The level of awareness about the laws and provisions made by the Indian government for Female Security is very less. In today's generation there are many females who are still of the belief that domestic violence is a part of their life and it is not something that they need to raise their voice against and act upon. Why females here are told to learn self-defence; instead the men should be told to learn basic respect and manners for women. It is definitely a shameful scenario for India where a person like **Mahatma Gandhi** once said **“The day a woman can walk freely on the roads at night, that day we can say that India has achieved independence.”**

Review of Literature

Dr Shettar M. Rajeshwari (April 2015) attempts to analyse the status of Women Empowerment in India and further attempted to highlight the Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment. As per the researcher, the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. She has discovered that how women are victimized in their day to day life by various social evils. Women Empowerment is the vital instrument to expand women's ability to have resources and to make strategic life choices. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of up-liftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. Her study is based on the secondary sources. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by Government. As per the researcher inequality is still prevailing in the society. The study concludes by an observation that access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to Women Empowerment.

Dr Maruthi and Krishna Sridevi (2013) have undertaken a research on Violation of Human Rights of Women in India. The researchers have stated that human Rights are basic right to which every individual is entitled as a human being. They are the minimum rights, which are compulsorily obtainable by every individual. The constitution of India also guarantees the equality of rights of men and women. However, in the sphere of women's human rights in India, there exists a wide gulf between theory and practice. Indian society is a male dominated society where men are always considered to be superior. The women in India very often have to face discrimination and injustice. Though women in India have been given more rights as compared to men, even then the condition of women in India is miserable. The researcher tries to throw light on the human rights of women in India and also on how all the fundamental rights given to the women have been violated in India, by focusing on the various crimes done against them.

Dr Gupta Sonia (2018) had carried out a research on The Role of Media in Women Empowerment In India. The researcher throws light on the problems of women in general and focuses on the role of media in women Empowerment. She has attempted to analyse the status of women by analysing various indicators like socio, economic and decision making powers. Women are in front, leading the country, making mile stones and source of inspiration for many. However, the researcher stated that; another reality of Indian society is that there is systematic discrimination and neglect of women's in India, which could be in terms of limited access to education, health and property rights and domestic violence etc. The fear of sexual violence has been a powerful factor in restricting women's behaviour and sense of freedom. The struggle against violence is actually the struggle against the unequal distribution of power both physical and economic between the sexes. Women empowerment in India is still a distant dream. India is fast developing but women's in India continue to be discriminated. Media is the mirror of society and media reports are reflection of happenings in the society. Communication is extremely important for women's development and mass media play significant role. This study was based on primary and secondary sources. The research concludes by an observation that access to education and employment are only the enabling factors to empowerment, achievement towards the goal, however, depends largely on the attitude of the people towards gender equality.

Ahamad Tauffiqu and Mishra Anil (January 2016) had undertaken a research on the Legal status and rights of women in Indian Constitution. As per their research law is the set of rules enforced to govern the behaviour of people. World can never be complete without a woman. From the beginning of this world women is treated as a weaker section of the society and they are the victims of the crimes like rape, eve teasing, female infanticide, dowry, domestic violence, child marriage and acid throwing. They were only allowed to live beneath the shoes of their husbands and fathers. Laws are being made to secure the lives of the women from the violence of their families and societies, and to provide them with their rights of which they are the owners. The researchers in their research paper tried to cover the aspect of women from past history to the present world. It shows how the law of our country has contributed its best to change the lives of women, to make them live with dignity and respect not as a slave.

Research Methodology

Objective of the Study

1. The purpose of this paper is to determine the level of awareness amongst the women in Mumbai about the laws related to safety and empowerment of a woman.
2. The research paper would also throw light on the ground level implementation of these laws in an effective manner.

Hypothesis

H₀: Women of Mumbai are not aware about the basic laws related to safety and empowerment of a woman.

H₁: Women of Mumbai are aware about the basic laws related to safety and empowerment of a woman.

H₀: There is an appropriate implementation of these laws at the ground level.

H₁: There is an inappropriate implementation of these laws at the ground level.

Source of Data

Primary Source: Interaction with women in Mumbai regarding their level of awareness and effectiveness of the laws relating to Woman Safety and Empowerment

Secondary Source:

1. **Books:** Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead (Sheryl Sandberg) and Enjoying India: Women's Safety (J D Viharini)
2. **Women centric websites and magazines**

Research Design

This is an Exploratory Research

Sampling Plan

This research is carried on with Random Sampling technique.

Sample Size

A sample size of 100 females is taken into consideration for research purpose.

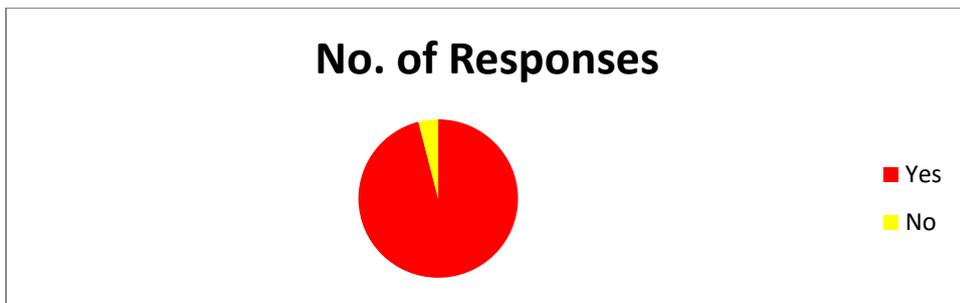
Limitation

This research is limited to the city of Mumbai due to geographical limitations.

Further the secondary data is collected from only 100 females due to time and cost limitations.

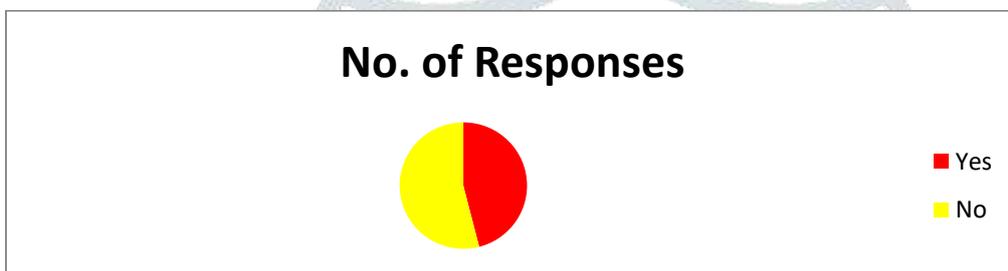
Data Analysis and Findings

1. **Are you aware about the laws which are devised for women safety?**



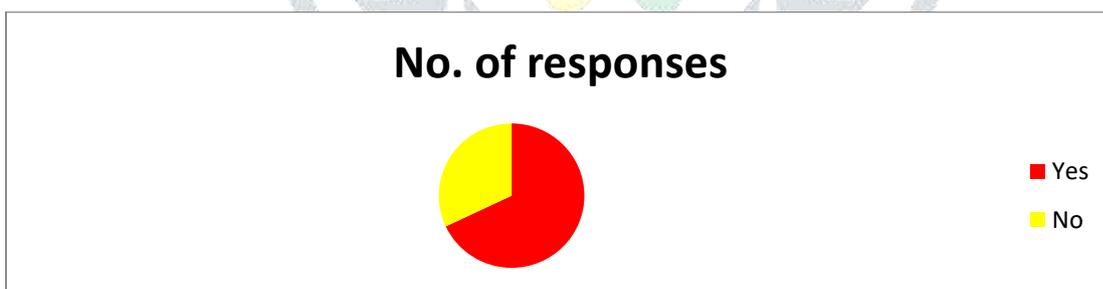
➤ The findings state that out of 100 females 96 were aware of the laws which are devised for women safety and 04 were unaware of the same.

2. Do you think the laws which are present are sufficient for women empowerment and safety?



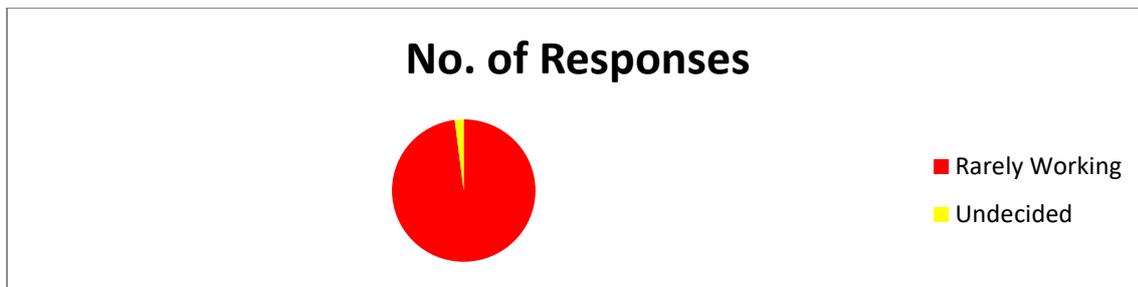
➤ The findings state that out of 100 females 46 feel that the laws are sufficient for women empowerment and 54 feel that the laws are insufficient and have a scope of improvement.

3. Is there a need for a new laws or punishments to safeguard women in India?



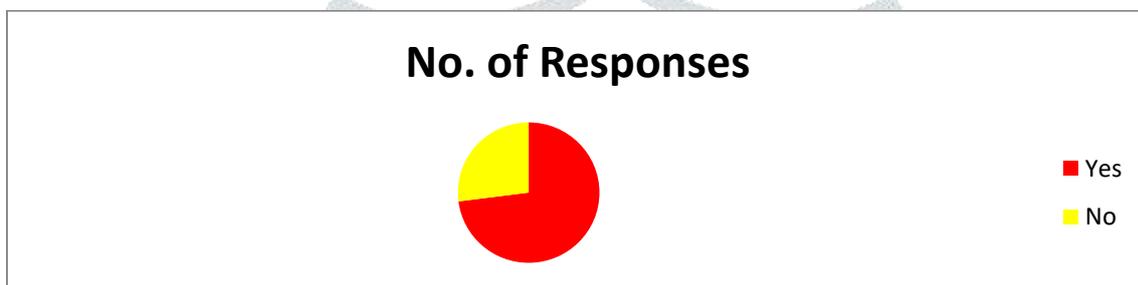
➤ The findings state that out of 100 females 68 feel that new laws or punishments are required to safeguard women safety in India and 32 feel that the current laws and punishments are sufficient.

4. Do you think the emergency numbers which are given for women help are working in a proper state?



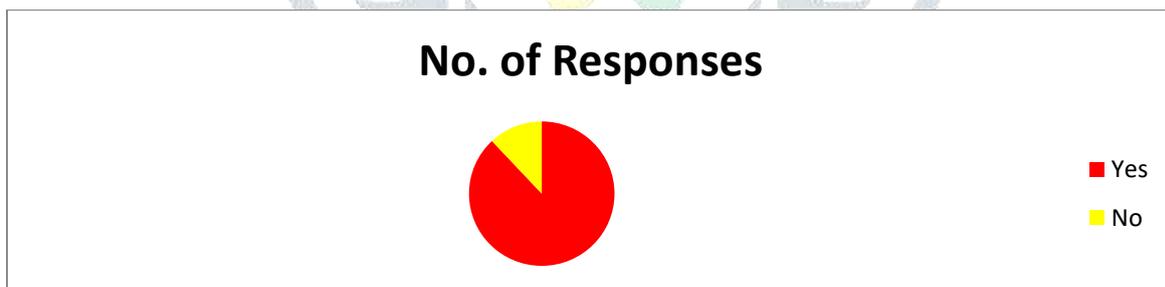
- The findings state that out of 100 females 98 find them rarely working and 2 of them were undecided about the same.

5. Do you think in sexual harassment in organisations is very common?



- The findings state that out of 100 females 73 agree to the fact that sexual harassment is very rampant in the organisations; whereas 27 disagree to the same.

6. Are there more prominent cases of eve teasing and sexual harassment in rural areas?



- The findings state that out of 100 females 88 are of the opinion that eve teasing and sexual harassment is more prominent in the rural areas; whereas 12 women are not in favour of the same.

Findings

From the above data analysis we can consider the following:

1. Most of the women in Mumbai are working and are trying to be independent and are breaking the glass ceiling in every field possible.
2. Majority of the females at some or the other time in their life have been sexually abused or eve-teased by men.
3. The data analysis states that approximately 60% of females are aware about the laws which are framed for their safety and empowerment.
4. The women on the other hand also feel that there are many loop holes in the female protection area which has to be focused upon by Indian Legal System.
5. As per the data analysis we can also conclude that the women are still not confident about the ground level implementation of the laws.
6. There have been instances which have pointed out where the police or the legal systems have not supported the women in times of need.
7. Overall due to the above issues we can conclude that there are laws which women are aware about but the Indian legal system has not been strong enough to execute the same.

Conclusion

From all of the above findings we can conclude that most of the females have the potential to achieve great heights but they cannot reach there due to the unfavourable atmosphere. Most of the time they are either pushed down or they are shamed upon. The Indian legal system has not been successful to create a sense of confidence amongst women that there is someone to protect them at any time of the day and if need arises there would be a strict action taken against people who have restricted or shamed women at any point of time. People in other countries like China, Saudi Arabia and USA fear law and are aware of the immediate actions taken by the legal system if found guilty for sexual assault or eve-teasing. But in India the sad part is that people accuse the rape victim more than the rapist. There are candle marches for the rape victims for 2-3 days and then there is another rape case on the fourth day and the cycle continues. This is the sad conclusion of the Indian legal system in India. There is; till date no rapist which has been hanged till death for the crime which he has done and due to these statistics no Indian fears the legal system.

Suggestions and Recommendations

1. Women should be well aware about their rights and their implications and make use of these rights when required.
2. The ground implications of these laws should be done in an appropriate manner.

3. People should fear the repercussions of going against the laws; it is only then we can dream of a better tomorrow for women.
4. The laws which have been framed for women safety should have more severe punishments.
5. The Indian men should be taught from childhood how to behave and respect women.

References

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