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A Study on - Crime against Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women' constitutes an array of abuses targeted at women and girl, may be sex-selective abortion or the abuse of elder women. Geographically or culturally, various of such abuses are female genital mutilation, dowry deaths, sexual harassment, acid throwing or acid attack, kidnapping and abduction of women, insult to the modesty of women, voyeurism, stalking, trafficking and honour killing (the murder of women who have allegedly brought shame to their family) as well as forms of violence that are prevalent worldwide such as domestic violence and rape. Several potential perpetrators are there including spouses and partners, other family members and relatives, neighbours, teachers, employers, policeman, soldiers, and other State employees.

Key Words-Crime, Honour Killing, Stalking

Introduction:

Crime against women is a worldwide epidemic. It may take different forms depending on history, culture, background, and experiences, but it causes great suffering for women, their families, and the communities in which they live. Crime against woman is one of the most regular and prevalent human rights violations. It is rooted in gendered social structures rather than individual and random acts; it cuts across age, socio-economic, educational and geographic boundaries; affects all societies; and is a major obstacle to ending gender inequality and discrimination globally.

The crime trend in India is rising and studies suggest that reported crimes in India are rising too. The modern women have participated in every field from freedom movement to going into the space; every field has been touched by the excellence of women. The women of today have faced many problems ranging from decreased sex ratio to trafficking of women for procurement of marriage from human rights violation to bonded labour etc. The questionable point in terms of safety makes us delve into the details of crime taking place against women. It has raised eyebrows and the poignant, perturbing issues have killed the sentiments of people to believe that there will be safer India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Amarteya Sen in 1992 coined the phrase 'Missing Women'. It means that the parts of developing world notably India – the ratio has been suspiciously low. The males outnumber the female at birth.

Scott, et al., 2014 observed that excessive masculine population sex ratio is a higher rate of crime and violence. Population with excess of men, especially, young men would exhibit to high rates of criminal offending and victimization. On the contrary, comparatively low male to female sex ratios should exhibit relatively low rates of crime. Particularly an important determinant of overall crime rates is excessive proportion of men in the prime offending ages (e.g.; teenagers and young adults).

Kaur, et al., 2016 analysed that there exists a negative relationship between sex ratio and crime rates for both violent crimes and crimes against women. That means, higher the male adult sex ratio, lower is the crime rate. They also analysed a strong positive relation between crime against women and the gap between male and female years of education. Rise in unmarried males exhibits lowering of crime against women. Excess of males in the societies becomes a reason for increased reports of trafficking and abduction of women, forced marriage, bride-buying and sexual assault.

Guttentag and Secord's, 1983 analysed where men are abundant and women are numerically scarce, they will be treated with deterrence and respect.

Where men's marriage opportunities are plentiful i.e., when women are numerically abundant, there women will be more likely to be harassed. Therefore, there thesis that when men are in relative oversupply and women are numerically undersupply, then women will be less likely to be victimized than in less "favourable" sex ratio contexts.

Hudson et al., 2002 analysed in their alarmist findings that the sex ratio had a significant effect on crime against Women. Unmarried or unattached males contribute to deteriorating law and order situation whenever there are excess males in society.

Mukherjee et al., 2001 analysed that socio-economic factors such as female literacy rate, female work participation rate and sex ratio is correlated with crime rates of various crimes such as rape, dowry deaths and so on.

Michelle T.Hackett, 2011 analysed that the States with higher levels of gender, equality, urbanisation, health and education experiences the lower rates of dowry deaths crimes and vice-versa.

It was analysed that dowry death crime is less prone in States with higher levels of 'human', 'gender-equality' and 'urban-development' and vice-versa. In other words, it can be said that the less developed Indian States appear to have more dowry deaths (per capita) than the more developed Indian States. Therefore, results show that lower 'gender-equality with development' appears to have greater dowry death crime rates. Also, Indian States with lower female literacy, health and employment, present in the 'human' and 'urban development factors', appear to have higher levels of dowry death rates.

Rao, 1997 explained that dowry deaths are treated as a fatal form of domestic violence. Dowry death is considered as one of the most prominent domestic violence in India. In this paper, findings show that in rural Karnataka, the vital factor of domestic violence is an 'inadequate' dowry (independent of wealth, education, etc.).

Verma and Collumbien, 2003 anlaysed that similar results were found in the slums of metropolitan city such as, Mumbai where dowry deaths is the most prevailing . Further dowry is demanded by the wife's family by beating her and is considered as an economic motivator of domestic violence.

Flood and Pease, 2009 analysed that Individual women are more likely to blame themselves for the sexual harassment, rather than to report it to the police or other authorities. It was found that gender gap is a vital factor in supporting violence against women. Conservative gender norms lead to tolerance for violence.

Hird and Jackson, 2001 observed that for many boys and girls, sexual harassment is pervasive, male aggression is normal, girls are routinely objectified. Thus, violence against women is taken as a less serious and acceptable.

Viki and Abrams, 2002 explained that violence against women is, many-a-times driven by some traditional beliefs and cultural norms. Like, women who dress less modestly and more suggestively are more likely to be seen as responsible for and deserving of sexual harassment. They are more likely to 'provoke' sexual harassment if they are attractive, if they are wearing short rather than long skirt. On the other side, stereotypically attractive male perpetrators are more likely to be judged as less harassing.

Hudson and Boer, 2004 stated that, the dowry prices in many parts of India have been increased. High male to female ratio often trigger domestic and international violence. Most violent crimes are committed by young unmarried males who lack social stable bonds. Therefore, a clear indication is provided that the surplus men make society violence prevalent.

Dreze and Khera, 2000 observed that there was a clear link between sex ratio and violence against women, which mostly occurs when there is a shortage of females. Areas of violence are associated with sharp gender inequalities. Propensity to kill women increases due to male child preference. Therefore, parental neglect of female children and high female murder rates are two manifestations of one phenomenon i.e.; **'Violence against Women'**. It shows a strong link between gender relations and crime against women.

Mangoli and Tarase, 2009 observed that women are widely treated as inferior to men in different spheres. In rural places, wife-beating, torture of unmarried daughters, sisters and other family relatives is a common phenomenon. Humiliation, sexual harassment, torture and exploitation of women are as old as the history of family life. The general acceptance of men's superiority over women is the main cause due to which violence acts against women is not viewed as violent by themselves due to their religious values and social beliefs and attitudes.

Umar, 1998 observed that the young married women have been beaten, tortured and burnt to death or compelled to commit suicide. The reason is nothing but the desired amount of dowry which her family was not able to fulfil. The dowry related violence is not only inflicted by the husband, but also by the entire family of the husband. Especially, the mother-in-law has emerged as a dominating figure in violence and the harassment of the daughter-in-law. Even after receiving a substantial dowry, the husband and his parents keep on demanding more dowry either in cash or kind from parents, and if she is unable to satisfy the demand, she is ill-treated, battered, and at the climax she is burnt alive or forced to commit suicide.

Jha, 2015 analysed that there was no clear relationship between assault crime and the other two social indicators i.e.; sex ratio and literacy rates.

Verma, 1990 analysed that crimes against women have roots in the male-dominated socio-economic, legal and political order.

Panchanadeswaran and Koverola, 2005 analysed that the precipitating event for violence against women can be due to non-fulfilment of a gift (dowry) from the woman's parents, extreme drunkenness, and verbal retaliation by the woman's parents during an argument, physical jealousy, instigation by in-laws o n a dowry issue, etc. Insufficient dowry or inability to meet subsequent demands of money and gifts were critical precipitators of violent-episodes. An increased harassment for dowry has been revealed.

Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004 observed that dowry issue plays a significant role in the initiation and perpetration of violence against women. Most of the violence has been associated with lower dowries.

Kumar, 2014 explained various factors related to crime against women. There are various social causes of crime against women like inferior status of women due to social conditioning, patriarchal structure of society, unpleasant family atmosphere, broken houses, living atmosphere, too much intrusion in the life of children by parents, addiction to alcoholism and drugs, immortality, cruelty, sickness and modern permissive atmosphere, etc. Man occupies a superior status and the women are merely his accessory in the eyes of the Indian society. Also, unemployment and poverty have become the cause of violence against women as unemployed men have been found beating their wives as they imagine their wives enjoying with other men at place of work, which becomes a cause of emotional distress and thereby leads to the violence against women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1) To explore and enquire into the causes and factors leading to crime against women.
2) To analyse the crime trend increasing against women in India

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, a Statewise analysis of 15 States of India taken randomly, is carried out for the effect of socio- economic indicators such as **'GSDP', 'Sex Ratio', 'Child Sex Ratio', and 'Female to Male Literacy Ratio'** on crime, especially **'Crime against women'**. Crime against women includes 4

heads: **'sexual harassment', 'dowry deaths', 'acid attack', and 'insult to the modesty of women'**.

Data on crimes has been sourced from **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs,** from the year 2014 to 2016. Crime rate per 1 lakhs of population has been taken.

GSDP data has been taken at constant prices. GSDP per capita of population **(Census 2011)** has been calculated at constant prices. Data has been sourced from: i) Economic and Statistical Organisation, Pune; and ii) Central Statistical Organisation, Punjab.

Formula used for calculating GSDP per capita population:

$$\frac{\text{GSDP at constant prices for the particular year (in crores)}}{\text{Population of that year}}$$

Sex ratio data has been sourced from Census 2011 data. Total sex ratio including rural and urban has been taken. Child sex ratio data for age 0-6 years has been taken from Census 2011 data. Total child sex ratio including rural and urban has been taken.

Female to male literacy and male literacy rate data has been extracted from Census 2011 data, and then female to male literacy rate has been calculated and the result is taken in terms of rounded off to about 2 decimal places.

Formula used for calculating Female to Male Literacy ratio:

$$\frac{\text{Female literacy rate}}{\text{Male literacy rate}}$$

A linear regression was made run on the variables. Then the results are extracted from regression in tabulation form and regression equations have been made accordingly. Only the results which are statistically significant according to t-statistics have been collected and findings are made accordingly.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

2014-15:

Sexual Harassment $=74364.75+10570.842$ GSDP $+U_i$

(t= 2.223)

(R Square= 0.276)

It depicts that when GSDP increases Sexual Harassment also increases. Therefore, statistically significant linear dependence of Sexual Harassment on GSDP in the year 2014 is detected. Also, 27% of variation in Sexual Harassment is explained by the variation in GSDP.

2014-15:

Acid Attack$=112663.678+498729.092$ GSDP $+U_i$

(t= 1.180)

(R Square= 0.097)

It depicts that when GSDP increases Acid Attack also increases. Therefore, statistically significant linear dependence of Acid Attack on GSDP in the year 2014 is detected. Also, 9% of variation in Acid Attack is explained by the variation in GSDP.

2014-15:

Insult to the Modesty of Women$=103248.297+7146.178$ GSDP $+U_i$

(t= 1.903)

(R Square= 0.218)

It depicts that when GSDP increases Insult to the Modesty of Women also increases. Therefore, statistically significant linear dependence of Insult to the Modesty of Women on GSDP in the year 2014 is detected. Also, 21% of variation in Insult to the Modesty of Women is explained by the variation in GSDP.

2016-17:

Acid Attack$=110901.387+2598319.833$ GSDP $+U_i$

(t= 5.995)

(R Square= 0.947)

It depicts that when GSDP increases Acid Attack also increases. Therefore, statistically significant linear dependence of Acid Attack on GSDP in the year 2016 is detected. Also, 94% of variation in Acid Attack is explained by the variation in GSDP. Hence, the nice tight function is followed by the data as GSDP best explains Acid Attack in 2016.

Logically, it is clear from the above statistics that when GSDP increases, then various types of crime such as sexual harassment, acid attack, insult to the modesty of women also increases. The logic behind this relationship is simple - as GSDP is increasing, society is getting richer and modernised, due to which women's status gets adversely affected. There are various other reasons behind it:

More money can also lead to excessive alcoholism which may lead to increased sexual assault. When people become richer, FIR becomes easy i.e.; it becomes easy to lodge a complaint. Awareness has also increased due to various campaigns and advertisements which may even state the helpline numbers especially for women, so more cases are coming reported.

In consumerism society, sexual assaults are more. Culture lag gap arises because though people are getting richer but they are not following their culture. Earlier when people used to live in joint families, one can easily identify a person that whose daughter or son he or she is. Comparatively, they felt shame in indulging such crimes when everybody used to live very close to each other, when houses were close to each other. But now, when families have become nuclear, due to rise in wealth, people have stopped feeling shame in committing such evil acts of violence against women.

2014:

Dowry Deaths=970.395-23.686Sex Ratio+Ui

$$(t= -1.572)$$

$$(R\ Square= 0.160)$$

It depicts that when Sex Ratio decreases Dowry Deaths increases. Therefore, statistically significant linear dependence of Dowry Deaths on Sex Ratio in the year 2014 is detected. Also, 16% of variation in Dowry Deaths is explained by the variation in Sex Ratio.

2014:

Acid Attack=951.583-535.833Sex Ratio+Ui

$$(t= -1.579)$$

$$(R\ Square= 0.161)$$

It depicts that when Sex Ratio decreases Acid Attack increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Acid Attack on Sex Ratio in the year 2014 is detected. Also, 16% of variation in Acid Attack is explained by the variation in Sex Ratio.

2015:

Dowry Deaths=973.184-29.558Sex Ratio+Ui

$$(t= -1.655)$$

$$(R\ Square= 0.174)$$

It depicts that when Sex Ratio decreases Dowry Deaths increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Dowry Deaths on Sex Ratio in the year 2015 is detected. Also, 17% of variation in Dowry Deaths is explained by the variation in Sex Ratio.

2016:

Dowry Deaths=974.501-29.677Sex Ratio+Ui

$$(t= -1.703)$$

$$(R\ Square= 0.182)$$

It depicts that when Sex Ratio decreases Dowry Deaths increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Dowry Deaths on Sex Ratio in the year 2016 is detected. Also, 18% of variation in Dowry Deaths is explained by the variation in Sex Ratio.

Logically, it is clear from the above statistics, that when sex ratio declines, two types of violence against women - acid attack and dowry deaths increases. As it can also be extracted from the above literature review part that when women are in undersupply as compared to men numerically, then they are more prone to violence related activities. The reasons may be many- *'lack of marriageability', 'frustration', 'some males are of low socio-economic class', 'marginalisation', 'getting jealous of other males who are married or committed'.*

Even one of the reasons due to which sex ratio falls is the preference for male child which is the outcome of specific kind of violence i.e.; sex-selective abortion and female infanticide. This is a clear indication that sex ratio itself declines due to such violent practices which are against women. Rather respecting women in societies where there is scarcity of women, people engage in continuously disrespecting her and committing in activities related to her exploitation.

2014:

Female to Male Literacy= -9.502+17.556Sexual Harassment+Ui

$$(t= 1.616)$$

$$(R\ Square= 0.167)$$

It depicts that when Sexual Harassment increases, Female to Male Literacy increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Female to Male Literacy on Sexual Harassment in the year 2014 is detected. Also, 16% of variation in Female to Male Literacy is explained by the variation in Sexual Harassment.

2014:

Female to Male Literacy=5.691-5.546Dowry Deaths+Ui

$$(t= -1.849)$$

$$(R\ Square= 0.208)$$

It depicts that when Dowry Deaths decreases, Female to Male Literacy increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Female to Male Literacy on Dowry Deaths in the year 2014 is detected. Also, 20% of variation in Female to Male Literacy is explained by the variation in Dowry Deaths.

2015:

Female to Male Literacy= -10.144+18.366Sexual Harassment+Ui

$$(t=1.804)$$

$$(R\ Square= 0.200)$$

It depicts that when Sexual Harassment increases, Female to Male Literacy increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Female to Male Literacy on Sexual Harassment in the year 2015 is detected. Also, 20% of variation in Female to Male Literacy is explained by the variation in Sexual Harassment.

2015:

Female to Male Literacy=5.614-5.642Dowry Deaths+Ui

$$(t= -2.406)$$

$$(R \text{ Square}= 0.308)$$

It depicts that when Dowry Deaths decreases, Female to Male Literacy increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Female to Male Literacy on Dowry Deaths in the year 2015 is detected. Also, 30% of variation in Female to Male Literacy is explained by the variation in Dowry Deaths.

2016:

Female to Male Literacy=5.080-4.925Dowry Deaths+Ui

$$(t= -1.947)$$

$$(R\text{-Square}=0.226)$$

It depicts that when Dowry Deaths decreases, Female to Male Literacy increases. Therefore, a statistically significant linear dependence of Female to Male Literacy on Dowry Deaths in the year 2016 is detected. Also, 22% of variation in Female to Male Literacy is explained by the variation in Dowry Deaths.

Logically, it can be seen that there is a positive relation between sexual harassment and female to male literacy, and a negative relation between dowry deaths and female to male literacy.

It is so because when females are literate, there will be more chances for the cases of sexual harassment to go reported, as compared to illiterate women. A Literate woman is well – aware of her rights, and in case if she is being assaulted, she knew better how to deal with it. So, therefore, lodging a complaint or F.I.R becomes easy. Also, when she is well – educated, the cases of dowry becomes less. As women becomes literate, they become independent, almost every woman become against the practice of dowry, and in case if someone asks for dowry at the time of her marriage, she knew better how to deal because she can raise her voice against it, as she is well aware. Therefore, due to her literate characteristic, dowry deaths have decreased.

CONCLUSION:

1. An increasing trend was observed in the crime rate of sexual harassment, acid attack, dowry deaths and insult to the modesty of women. In the year 2014-15, when GSDP per capita population increases, then crime rates of sexual harassment, acid attack and insult to the modesty of women. In the year 2016-17, an increase in the crime rate of acid attack was observed. It is so because when there is more money in the hands of people, harassment, acid attack becomes easy for the culprits. More and more cases go reported as FIR becomes easy for the victims, awareness campaigns and advertisements related to violence protection increases. No increase in the crime rate of dowry deaths has been observed with effect from increase in GSDP per capita population. With the decrease in sex ratio, crime rate of dowry deaths, acid attack increases in the year 2014. And also, in the year 2015 and 2016, crime rate of dowry deaths is increased. It is so because when males outnumber females, then violence related to women increases. They are being exploited which may be due to frustration arising from jealousy from other males who are married or committed, are from low socio-economic class, etc. It has been observed that when female to male literacy increases, then sexual harassment activities increases and rate of dowry deaths decreases in the year 2014, 2015 and 2016. But no effect to the rate of sexual harassment has been observed in the year 2016 from female to male literacy. It is so because when girls become more educated, then FIR becomes easy as they are well- aware that how to deal with violence and so, as a result, activities related to sexual harassment are reported and shows an increase, similarly, dowry deaths is decreased as well-educated girls go against dowries and hence, violence.

References:

[1] *Amarteya Sen in 1992* coined the phrase 'Missing Women'. It means that the parts of developing world notably India – the ratio has been suspiciously low.

[2] *Hudson and Boer, 2004* stated that, the dowry prices in many parts of India have been increased. High male to female ratio often trigger domestic and international violence.

[3] *Kaur, et al., 2016* analysed that there exists a negative relationship between sex ratio and crime rates for both violent crimes and crimes against women. That means, higher the male adult sex ratio, lower is the crime rate

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[6] *Rao, 1997* explained that dowry deaths are treated as a fatal form of domestic violence. Dowry death is considered as one of the most prominent domestic violence in India.