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Violence against Women in India: A Social Work Perspective

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Introduction:

Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. It both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. The low social and economic status of women can be both a cause and a consequence of this violence.

The family socialises its members to accept hierarchical relations expressed in unequal division of labour between the sexes and power over the allocation of resources. The family and its operational unit is where the child is exposed to gender differences since birth, and in recent times even before birth, in the form of sex-determination tests leading to foeticide and female infanticide. The home, which is supposed to be the most secure place, is where women are most exposed to violence.

Violence against women throughout their life cycle is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men. It is perpetuated by traditional and customary practices that accord women lower status in the family, workplace, community and society, and it is exacerbated by social pressures. These include the shame surrounding and hence difficulty of denouncing certain acts against women; women's lack of access to legal information, aid or protection; a dearth of laws that effectively prohibit violence against women; inadequate efforts on the part of public authorities to promote awareness of and enforce existing laws; and the absence of educational and other means to address the causes and consequences of violence. Images in the media of violence against women – especially those that depict rape, sexual slavery or the use of women and girls as sex objects, including pornography – are factors contributing to the continued prevalence of such violence, adversely influencing the community at large, in particular children and young people.

Women in Indian Society:

Indian society is male dominated and women are treated as dependent on men therefore social support is key determinant in entrepreneurial establishment by women.

The society plays a dominant role in entrepreneurial venture and success. Still the perception of women in society depends on gender and men perceive the role of women much more traditionally.

Women entrepreneurs in the society facing many problems not only at the time of establishment of business but also at the time of functioning the business they are facing operational difficulties.

The women have been discouraged on gender grounds in different walks of life. Some gender related myths created stereotypes in the minds of men which in turn results in suspicion about women efficiency and capabilities. People do not always like working for female bosses. This creates problem in getting confidence and attracting human resources, physical and finance resources.

Women has to perform dual responsibility one at work and another at family as mother or wife. The responsibility of family care largely depends in the hands of women. Women entrepreneurs in India have suffered from dual role conflict and dual responsibility conflict. Normally, family members want to enjoy the fruits of the business but are not necessarily ready to cooperate with the functioning of enterprise. Career of women in traditional society was limited to four-walls of kitchen. But, now women have opportunity to get relatively more freedom in terms of entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, the success or failure of business is dependent on how well women perform balancing act between family and work and how much support she can attain from family, friends, relatives and neighbors. Women in India have exhibited excellent skills in managing "Relationships" even the uneducated and less educated women have been managing relationships very skillfully in Indian traditional large combined families. Managing relationships is nothing but "Interpersonal skills" which is the single most important skill for business. It is this strength that women should leverage in running enterprise successfully.

Types of Violence against Women:

Women Trafficking:

The problem of prostitution and trafficking in women seems to have increased tremendously in the last two decades. Trafficking in women and children, most often for commercial sexual exploitation is estimated to raise up to 8 million US dollar each year, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The huge profit reaped by the perpetrators, increasingly linked to organized crimes has turned this trade into a rapidly growing menace. Poor women and the girls are among the target groups of traffickers, because other magnetization of poverty and limited economic resources. In India, a gang of traffickers induces the poor and wretched women and children for love marriage and also pretension of love and marriage and illegally traffic them to Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Middle East countries to become domestic servants and often used sexually.

Violence of Dowry:

The practice of demanding dowry has spread so much. For that, death by burning is often punishment for the innocent young girls who is unable to satisfy the greed of her in-laws. Most of the women burnt by their in-laws or take the decision of suicide for dowry related tortures.

Rape and Sexual Abuse:

Rape is an unlawful sexual intercourse with a female person without her consent by force or threat of force. It is the most series and frequently occurred form of violence against women. The unfortunate part of the story is that the raped women is socially condemned, ostracized and boycotted, ignored and widely believed to be responsible for their own rape. A raped woman also is considered as abandoned women no place in the society, hence the raped women or relatives of that woman keep the incidents secrets. There are various forms of rape in India, such as: rape in work place, rape in domestic environment, rape in police custody, child rape, gang rape, data rape institutional rape, spousal rape and rape by intimate male relations.

Acid Throwing:

Acid throwing is another form of violence against women, which are increasing at alarming women, which are increasing at an alarming rate. The young and teenaged girls are victims of acid burn because of refusal of marriage and rejection of love proposal given by young man. Acid burns also taken as measures of personal revenge, family quarrel and quarrel in couple and also feuds between two families, kinship. Although laws have been made against such cruelty, the offenders are practicing very often in the society.

Abduction:

Women are helpless and suffer from a deep sense of insecurity with the increase of deterioration of law and order situation the scale of abduction has astronomically risen particularly in industrial cities where the female workers are abundant in garments factories, the abduction case has sharply increased. Not only it is confined to garments workers only, the teen aged girls are also reported being abducted from the school premises. After abduction the criminals demand a big ransom for their release. In case they fail to get ransom the abducted girls are made worst victims of sex harassment, and in extreme cases they are brutally killed.

Domestic Violence

Subordination of women has led to violence under this head to rise. Incidence of domestic violence crosses all the barriers of class, income, culture and religion are in a high under reported crime. Domestic violence is one of the greatest obstacles to gender equality. It obstructs women to secure their fundamental rights to equal protection under the law and the right to life and liberty.

Harassment at Work Place and Eve Teasing

Whether out of choice or out of compulsion, most of the women who are involved in the work place in all vital sectors of country's economy may fall in the unorganized sectors. They are ill-paid but don't leave the job due to increasing unemployment. This need for survival drives to rape situations. Harassment at work place is all pervasive.

Table-1 Crime against Women during 2006 - 2010 and Percentage variation in 2010 over 2009

Sl. N	Type of Violence	Year					%
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
01	Rape	19348	20737	21467	21397	22172	3.6
02	Kidnapping & Abduction	17414	20416	22939	25741	29795	15.7
03	Dowry Death	7618	8093	8172	8383	8391	0.1
04	Torture	63128	75930	81344	89546	94041	5.0
05	Molestation	36617	38734	40413	38711	40613	4.0
06	Sexual Harassment	9956	10950	12214	11009	9961	-9.5
07	Importation of Girls	67	61	67	48	36	-25.0
08	Sati	-	-	01	-	-	-
09	Immoral Traffic	4541	3568	2659	2474	2499	1.0
10	Indecent Representation of Women	1562	1200	1025	845	895	5.9
11	Dowry	4504	5623	5555	5650	5182	-8.3
	Total	164765	185312	195856	203804	213585	4.8

Source: Indian Statistics, 2011

Various legislation for safeguarding the women:

There are various legislation has been incorporated regarding the safeguarding of the women. Various Legislation for safeguarding crime against women, classified under two categories:

The Crime under Indian Penal Code (IPC):

- Rape (Section 376 IPC)
- Kidnapping and abduction for specified purpose (Section 363-373 IPC)
- Homicide for dowry, Dowry death or their attempts. (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)
- Torture both mental and physical (Sec.498-A –IPC)
- Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
- Importation of girls (Up to 21 years of age) (Sec. 366-B IPC)

Women Related Acts

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act and rules.
- National Commission for Women Act.
- Amendment Proposed in Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 2005.

Conclusion:

Woman in the Vedic age was enjoying a higher status. She was the nerve center of the domestic work and was its empress. Domestic happiness and conjugal happiness are constant topics mentioned in the Rig Veda. The seer of the samhitas was never tired of speaking the bond that binds a happy home governed by a woman. But Now-a-Days Violence affects the live of millions of women and girls in all socio-economic classes around the world. It cuts across cultural and religious barriers and takes a variety of forms, from domestic abuse to the child marriages and female circumcision. Violence against women is largely unreported. Fear and stigma often prevent women from reporting incidents of violence or seeking assistance. In fact, 80 percent of women who have been physically abused by their partners have never informed the Police, NGOs or shelters. In December 1999, at the 54th Session, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring that November 25th the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls.

The basic reason for violence against women is their inferior status in a male dominated society as educationally, economically, politically and socially. Besides, there are also so many reasons too. More Awareness in Women of their Rights: Access to Mahila Courts, legal cells and crime cells for women helps directly or indirectly to encourage women to resister their complaints. Low Rate of Punishment of Guilty: Lack of evidence and lack of guidance, loop holes in existing laws are some of the reasons for the rise in crime against women. Law Pertaining to the Problem of Violence: International Conventions, the Constitution and various other legal provisions provide certain rights for women.

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