

**GENDER VIOLENCE IN INDIA. A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS WITH OTHER NATIONS – ANALYSING THE
ROOT CAUSES OF GENDER VIOLENCE**

Tanusree Sengupta*

Abstract

Sex is basically the biological difference between men and women. Gender on the other hand is the sociological differentiation between men and women.

Keywords:

Sex

Gender

Male

Female

We are born with our respective sex, male or female but Gender is something we imbibe later. The society teaches us to behave in a definite manner. Boys should behave in a specific manner, wear certain types of clothes, or girls should wear certain other types of clothes and behave in a different manner. The concept of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' has always been imposed on us by the larger society, out there. We are part of a larger whole and yet being guided and supervised by it simultaneously. Not abiding by the societies norms, leads one to be a deviant. Being male and being female is determined by the societal norms and rules.

*** (Sociology/Social Science Lecturer. Research Scholar. West Bengal State University)**

1. Introduction

Violence is an aggressive behavior towards others. It can take various forms. It can be physical violence, emotional, sexual, mental, or verbal abuse as well. We try to stress the role and reason for such deviant act. Through this paper we try to understand the basic norms of society and try to stress on Gender violence and reach the root cause of it. The universal difference between men and women have been accepted and respected worldwide but at the sake of the dignity of woman. The causes of women deprivation, segregation, and the neglect which women across the globe face irrespective of caste, class, educational or economic background is what this paper tries to stress upon.

The condition of a poor, uneducated third world country like India is the focus of this paper. We will try to stress on the present scenario of India and the other parts of the world as well.

Then we will try to get to the root cause of the domestic or gender violence which women have been facing since time immemorial.

Since the era of the Mahabharata, till present women have been victims of all forms of abuse. The nature and type of violence varies from society to society and context to context.

2. Research Method

The main part of the research will stress on primary data collection. Face to face interview and questionnaires would be of great help for this research. Data analysis and statistics from secondary sources would be of immense help for achieving the purpose of the result. A comparative analysis with the present and past scenario would be ideal to achieve the result of analyzing the present scenario of gender violence across the globe.

3. Results and Analysis

The results and interpretation of the data will be done based on primary data collected. A comparative analysis of the various data across the globe gathered from the Census and other secondary sources would be used towards the end of the research.

4. Discussion

The scenario in India

According to National Family and Health Survey in 2005, total lifetime prevalence of domestic violence was 33.5% and 8.5% for sexual violence among women aged 15 – 49. The 2012 NCRB, report of India states a reported crime rate of 46 per 100, 000 rape rates of 2 per 100, 000, dowry homicide rate of 0.7 per 100, 000 and the rate of domestic cruelty by husband or his relatives as 5.9 per 100, 000.

It is interesting to note that marital rape is still not considered as a crime in India and there is still no law to prove marital rape in India. Section 375 of the IPC, considers forced sex in marriage as crime only when the age of the wife is below 15. Marital rape, hence is not a criminal offence under IPC.

The Domestic Violence act of 2005 of India legally defines domestic violence and the prosecution guidelines of those cases that are reported to the police. The reported rate of crime in India is very less.

Tamsin Bradley in her book *Women and Violence in India*, says that different groups and different scholars have conceptualized the violence against women from different perspectives. Some have cited reference to religion, caste, and gender rendering aggression against women. She has also stressed on the role of neoliberalism and its corollary consumerism, playing a significant role in reducing women to commodity objects.

The most significant and shocking ratio is the percentage of women assaults taking place within the four walls of the house, whether from her male blood kins or in laws or her female relatives. The secured four walls of house hardly provide any security to women, neither mentally nor physically.

In an article published in 2015, in *Hindustan times* the famous columnist Kumkum Dasgupta writes, to end gender violence, India must adopt a ‘She+He’ approach. She has pointed out a very crucial point saying that 4 in 10 women in India experience harassment before she has

attained the age of 19. In this regard, no battle can be won, violence can hardly be eradicated until men are also equally involved in the struggle.

Police Districts Registering above 2,000 cases under Crime against Women during 2015

	State	Police District	No.of Cases
1.	Maharashtra	Mumbai Commr	4,803
2.	West Bengal	South 24 Parganas	4,073
3.	Karnataka	Bengaluru city	3,079
4.	West Bengal	Murshidabad	2,984
5.	Delhi UT	Outer District	2,284.

The ratio for violence till age 19 are, 16% in Brazil, while it is 12% in Britain and 8% in Thailand.

Everywhere, the Government changedover the years, new laws, policies, job opportunities nothing havebeen successful in bringing any significant change on the violent attitude of men towards women. Increase in women's empowerment or literacy levels have not brought down the percentages of crimes carried out against women.

ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1. **PATRIARCHY** – The basic male dominant society have always been a strong opponent to the women population. From ancient era, whether it was the epic characters of the Mahabharata, in India, women like Draupadi, Kunti or to the recent 20 the century women the patriarchal society. the basic attitude of men towards women and the physical superiority have been a primary reason for all forms of assault against women.

2. **LACK OF EDUCATION** – Educated sector are also a major victim and equal partner to carry out all forms of crime against women. But, to come down to the basic issues lack of basic awareness and education among the bulk of population have contributed towards the violence being taking a grave shape. Women, being illiterate have aggravated the situation. Lack of awareness and basic education among women have led to their lack of self-dignity, did not give

them opportunity or platform and scope to revolt and protest. Vice versa the men also lack the basic education and awareness that bringing down women or physically or mentally torturing women would only worsen the scenario.

3. **LACK OF EQUALITY** – The desire of an equalitarian society and egalitarian society would bring an end to all such problems perhaps. But although the constitution of most of the world speaks of an equalitarian social order, many orthodox conservative nations hardly practices it. Even the most sophisticated and even the most advanced nations of the world have believed in women being the ‘backward’, section of society. The desire for a male child still is dominant among majority of population across the globe.

4. **UNEMPLOYMENT** – Lack of employment opportunity is another cause for such high rates of violence against women. Both men and women are equal victims of the global unemployment ratio. Men being unemployed become frustrated and women of the house are easy victims, parallely, women counterparts do not have the economic independence to raise voice against any torture carried out against them either by men or women.

5. **SOCIAL STIGMA** – The social associations of being male and being female, behaving in a male like manner and female like manner is another cause. The role of parents and the society, school, college everything has aggravated the scenario. The focus is always on ‘being a male’ or ‘being a female’, and hardly on becoming or growing up a ‘human being’. Behaving in a girl like manner and male like manner, setting up a code of conduct for both the sexes, impositions by society creates a restriction and set code of conduct for both the sexes.

6. **THE AGE-OLD BELIEFS ASSOCIATED WITH RELGIOUS RITES** – women become ‘impure’ during menstruation day, restricted from performing religious rites, entering temples etc., orthodox, conservative religions are always too controlling towards women. Women do not even have rights over their bodies neither their decision to have a baby or not, using contraceptives are restricted by many religions itself.

7. Violence and discrimination against women and girls are human rights violations

8. **PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT** – The deviants are either alcoholic, drug addicts or perpetual criminals. There could be some psychological disorders as well.

9. **FAMILY/SCHOOL/RELIGION/BASIC PRIMARY SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS** – The role of the primary institutions in shaping an individual and contributing towards his/her socialization process are extremely important. The primary and basic pillars of society must play

a significant role in creating an equalitarian society. The segregation begins from homes and schools, when boys are forced to play with guns and girls with dolls. Boys are encouraged for higher education unlike girls in many families. These stereotypical views, attitudes must change. Irrespective of caste, creed, educational background all must contribute jointly towards growth.

10. FEAR OF SOCIAL STIGMA – The society at large should come forward and make a move. Most of the crimes carried out against women are unreported either due to pressure from family or because of the fear of social stigma or exclusion. Honour killings or rape or family brutality are rampant across the globe and the major victims of such incidents are women. But the fear of being ‘labelled’ as a rape victim or a victim of sexual assault leads to a huge percentage of unreported and unregistered crimes. This works as an advantage for both male and women perpetrators of crime.

On September 1995, at the Beijing Conference Governments declared that “violence against women constitutes a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace”

According to the Social Learning Theory, humans learn most of the social behaviors by observing other. Hence according to this theory aggression is not inevitable, rather it sees it as a social behavior which is leaned and shaped by its consequences, continuing if it is reinforced. (Lore and Schultz, 1993). From this perspective, it could be said that male violence against women are endures in human societies since it is modelled both at individual families and in the society more generally and has positive results, since there can be relief from tension, the perpetrator feels better and is rarely associated with serious punishment for the perpetrator.

It is important to note that many reported crimes carried out against women are not by carried out solely by men but rather by women themselves, mother in laws, sister in laws etc. This is perhaps an even more alarming situation, when carrying out torture or brutality becomes a habit and a sort of pain relief for some. A fight of the strong against the weaker section.

Laws are present, courts, institutions are also there but until and unless women themselves become aware, they themselves start protesting and realize the importance of protesting against violence in any form, manifest or latent, until then the situation can hardly change.

Criminologists have recognized that one important social consequence of crime that affects many people beyond only those who have been directly victimized, is the fear of crime (Hindelang et al., 1978; Skogan and Maxfield, 1981).

Researches often associate childhood memories, trauma with violent aggressive behavior, the pending frustrations could have led to aggression.

Most of the information and reports on violence against women are available either from clinical samples or general population surveys. Clinical samples hardly are representative of either victims or perpetrators, and the population surveys, the numbers of ethnic, racial, cultural, and other subgroups are too insignificant for analysis. The racial and ethnic issues apart from belonging to the minority sections, lesbians, migrant workers, immigrants, the homeless, the disabled, and the elderly all these women are easy prey and easy victims of crime.

Rape and other sexual crimes or even verbal sexual assault are punishable by law but the Nirbhaya case in New Delhi, where an innocent girl was raped brutally, or sexual or verbal targets on foreigners across the globe has not declined even if legal helps are available.

Stricter punishments are required. Generally, the legal framework has been in favour of women. But whether only law and the application of it can bring down violence against women is quite a debatable issue. At least, the reported cases of crime against women globally is a clear evidence that presence of law or legal guide have not been successful in bringing down crime rate against women.

Is it lust? Pleasure? Mere frustration? Aggressive behaviour? whatever be the reason it can hardly be denied that women of all age group across the globe are even today victims of crime of all sorts. Even women themselves are involved in carrying out crime and violence against women, such is the level of complex and frustration. The entire society must work together, both

men and women together to bring a change in the situation. The direct effects of physical, sexual violence, and psychological abuse) on individual women can be documented and are visible, but understanding indirect effects to victims, the fear of social exclusion which restricts many women to raise voice or protest is a serious concern.

In a national study of youths carried out on girls of age 10 to 16 years, more than 1/3rd reported having been victims of sexual or physical assaults. This group revealed experiencing huge psychological distress including sadness and symptoms of posttraumatic stress (Boney-McCoy and Finkelhor, 1995).

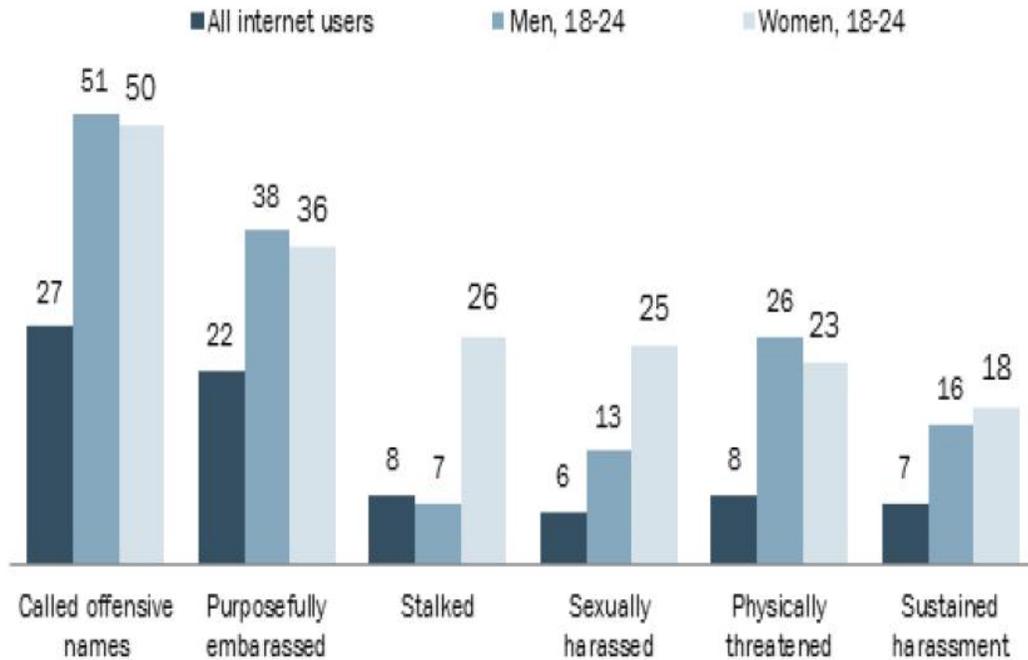
If we look at the global picture the scenario is even more grave

- On an average more than one in three women in the U.S. regularly fears of being sexually assaulted, according to a new report from Gallup. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, approximately 2.5 million cases of sexual violence were reported globally in 2014. with many countries reporting more than 100 instances of rape or sexual assault per 100,000 people.
- Out of the countries reporting to the United Nations, countries like Sweden, the U.K., Botswana and Australia reported highest rates of sexual violence. U.S has very high rate of reported rape cases.
- According to UNICEF more than 200 million females in 30 countries have undergone female genital mutilation, generally within a few years or months of birth. The practice is especially highest in Middle East and Africa.

The percentage of female feticide and infanticide are alarming across the globe. Although sex determination was a crime in many countries like India, still the rates of female feticide in countries like India is huge even today. The desire and craving for a boy child is responsible for the alarming scenario.

Young women experience particularly severe forms of online harassment

Among all internet users, the % who have personally experienced the following types of online harassment, by gender and age...



Source: American Trends Panel (wave 4). Survey conducted May 30-June 30, 2014. n=2,839.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIA, AND REST OF THE WORLD

- In 2007, approximately 8,093 reported cases of dowry-related death were registered in India. To everyone's surprise a huge percentage of murders of women and young girls were wrongly and falsely labelled either as 'suicides' or as 'accidents'.
- Approximately 40 - 70% of female murder victims in the so called developed nations of the world like Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa, and the United States, were killed by either known or intimate partners.
- In Mexico, approximately 66% of murders of women were committed by husbands, boyfriends, or other family members. Most of whom were either known or blood kins of women.

- On an average across the globe almost 50% of sexual assaults are being carried out against girls belonging to age group below 16.
- Almost 45% of reported sexual offences was forced.
- On an average 40 -50% of women in European Union countries even today are victims of unwanted sexual exploitation or other forms of sexual harassment at work.
- In United States, almost 83% of girls aged 12 to 16 experience some form of sexual assault at public schools.

(The Facts: Violence Against Women & Millennium Development Goals (compiled by UNIFEM, 2010). Available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#))

(<http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/299-fast-facts-statistics-on-violence-against-women-and-girls-.html>)

The backward 3rd countries or the advanced 1st world/2nd world countries throughout the globe women from all age group have been victims of crime in some form or the other.

According to an analysis carried out by WHO in 2013 in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Medical Research Council, almost 30% of women across the globe who at some point of their lives have been involved in some form of relationship with their male counterpart unfortunately, have experienced some form of physical and sexual violence by these intimate partners. Almost 38% of all murders of women are being carried out by intimate partners. These are quite shocking data. Keeping aside the physical injury the mental trauma and the pain which women goes through when being assaulted by their loved ones is something beyond imagination.

5. Conclusion

WHO, in collaboration with partners, have taken up few measures -

- Improving the methods for recording violence carried out against women and improving the SDG monitoring methods.
- Assessing partner violence in depth.
- Proper development of technical guidance for collecting evidence against assault or sexual violence.

- Improving national efforts to improve women's health and stressing on her rights.
- Improving health sector and stressing on the right implementation of WHO tools and guidelines.
- Collaborating with various international agencies and organizations to reduce and eliminate violence against women across the globe.

The above data and statistics reveal that violence against women is a universal problem. Not just uneducated sector but women from different background have been victims of crime. The abusers in many cases are known and are perpetual deviants.

The basic aim of the paper is not to see who the deviants are but to see why the violence against women are taking such a grave shape. Across the globe crimes against women are increasing day by day and in third world countries especially the scenario is dangerous. Government intervention, mass awareness and a basic ideological transformation are required to alter the situation. Neglecting one half of the population can never bring peace or glory. The male and women together can create a better world and better society. No matter what the societal position of women are, no matter which layer of society she is representing, her literacy level or empowerment status, women whether in 3rd world countries or the developed 1st world countries have been victims of crime in some form or the other. The suppressed threat to her dignity, to her existence continues even today. The aim of the paper was to see the present global scenario and to analyze some of the causes of the social evil which has been in existence since time immemorial. However, developed, progressive we may be as a race we can never be a HUMAN RACE until and unless we can speak of a truly egalitarian and equalitarian social order.

References

1. Behind closed doors – Domestic Violence in India by Rinki Bhattacharya. Published in January,2013. Sage Publications.
2. Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India By Mandakranta BoseOxford University Press, 2000
3. GENDER, IDENTITY AND MULTIPLE MARGINALITIES. Ishwar Modi (Ed.) Published in 2015.
4. The Dowry System in Northern India: Women's Attitudes and Social Change by Srinivasan, Padma; Lee, Gary RJournal of Marriage and Family, Vol. 66, No. 5, December 2004
5. Why does he do that? Inside the minds of Angry and controlling men by Lundy Bancroft. Published September 2nd, 2003 by Berkley (first published 2002)
6. We Are Poor but So Many: The Story of Self-Employed Women in India By Ela R. BhattOxford University Press, 2006
7. Yuganta, The end of an epoch – by Irawati Karve. Published by Orient Black swan Pvt.Ltd. First Published in English by Deshmukh Prakashan, 1969. First Orient Publication in 2008.