ATROCITIES ON WOMEN: MEDIA INITIATIVES

Presentation by

Dr. C.M. VINAYA KUMAR
M.A. (Eng. Litt.) MJMC, Ph. D (Jour)
Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication
Krishna University, Machilipatnam
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• The term ‘atrocities against women’ referred as “a cruel and wicked act against a woman to cause her emotional or physical injury or both“.

• The Police Research Bureau, Delhi classified “crime against women” as:
  1. crimes under the Indian Penal Code, and
  2. crimes under the local and special laws.
The Bureau has identified seven crimes in the first category and four crimes in the second category of crimes.

The seven crimes under the IPC are: rape, kidnapping and abduction, homicide for dowry, torture (physical and mental), molestation, eve-teasing; and importation of girls up to 21 years of age.

The four crimes under the local and special laws are: commission of sati, dowry prohibition, immoral traffic, and indecent representation of women.
“…Violence against women” means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

- United Nations’ General Assembly
Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women
(resolution 48/104 of December 1993)
**ADULT**
- Domestic Violence
- Same-sex domestic violence
- violence by fathers-, mothers-
- sisters-, brothers-in-law and natal
- family members; Sexual abuse includes
- marital rape, forced to watch and imitate
- pornographic acts, extreme sexual neglect
- or coldness; Economic abuse includes
- ruined credit, gambling; isolation, perma-
- nent or temporary abandonment; Battery
- during pregnancy; Coerced into criminal
- activity; Extreme exploitation of house-
- hold labour; Sexual harassment by
- employers, other employees, fathers-
- brothers-in-laws, clergy, therapists,
- doctors; Victim-blaming, rejection
- by community; Forced into unpro-
- tected sex, infected with STD's, STI's,
- HIV; Denying mothers access to,
- custody of children, international
- abduction/kidnapping; Intimate
- homicide, femicide, honour killings;
- Witholding adequate food,
- clothing, daily necessities; Stalking,
- cyber-stalking.

**Elder**
- Physical abuse by adult
- children, caretakers; Spousal
- abuse; Exploitation of house-
- hold labour, child care;
- Witholding health care,
- medications, daily necessities;
- Demeaning widowhood;
- Coerced suicide pacts or
- mercy killings.

**CHILD**
- Little or no schooling;
- Child labour;
- Child prostitution;
- Physical abuse;
- Neglect;
- Abandonment;
- Incest;
- Sexual abuse;
- Molestiation;
- Abusive
- “teasing” by sibling;
- Virgin
- cleansing.

**TEENAGER**
- Coerced sexual
- initiation, rape; Forced
- marriage to parent’s
- choice, much older man,
- teen’s rapist; Ignorance
- about sex, anatomy,
- sexual health; Control
- over sexuality and
- sexual orientation;
- Trafficked; Forced into
- prostitution; Cyber-
- stalking by boyfriend
- or unknown predators;
- Date violence; Harass-
- ment, public lewd-
- ness; Sexual harass-
- ment by extended
- family, teachers,
- coaches, peers.

**INFANT**
- Female foeticide;
- Sex-selected abortion;
- Infanticide; Mal/under-
- nourishment by
- withholding nutritious
- food; Medical care
- withheld.

**YOUNG ADULT**
- Date violence, drug-facilitated
- rape; Rape, including wartime rape;
- Denied choice of marriage partner
- and/or sexual orientation; Dowry-
- related deaths; Intimate partner
- violence; Sexual harassment at
- work, college.
Societal factors

Community factors

Relationship/family factors

Individual factors

Affecting women’s risk of being abused and men’s risk of abusing:
- Unequal position of women
- Poverty
- Normative use of violence (e.g. by police and other state institutions)
- Acceptance of traditional gender roles/norms
- Normative use of violence (e.g. in schools, workplaces)
- Weak community sanctions
- Man has multiple sexual partners
- Marital dissatisfaction
- Low or different level of education

Affecting women’s risk of being abused:
- Young age
- Low level of education
- Maltreatment or witnessing intra-parental violence as a child
- Depression
- Harmful use of alcohol/drugs
- Acceptance of violence

Affecting men’s risk of abusing:
- Low income
- Low level of education
- Being sexually abused or witnessing intra-parental violence as a child
- Antisocial personality
- Harmful use of alcohol/drugs
- Acceptance of violence
Laws protecting women's rights in India

1. Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)

2. Attempt to commit rape (Sec 376/511 IPC)

3. Kidnapping & abduction of women (K&A) (Section 363,364,364A, 366 IPC) - in order to murder, for ransom, to compel her for marriage and other purposes

4. Dowry deaths (Section 304B IPC)

5. Assault on woman with intent to outrage her modesty (Sex. 354 IPC) –
including sexual harassment, voyeurism and other forms of sexual violence

6. Insult to the modesty of women (Sec. 509 IPC) - including at work and in public transport

7. Cruelty by husband or his relatives (Sec. 498A IPC)

8. Importation of girl from foreign country (up to 21 years of age) (Sec. 366 B IPC)

9. Abetment of suicide of women (Sec. 306 IPC)
Gender specific laws in the country:

1. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
2. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
3. The Commission of Sati Prevention Act, 1987
4. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005*
5. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
Crime Against Women Percentage Distribution during 2014

- Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty: 24.3%
- Kidnapping & Abduction of Women: 17.0%
- Rape: 10.9%
- Dowry Deaths: 2.5%
- Insult to the Modesty of Women: 2.9%
- Attempt to Commit Rape: 1.3%
- Abetment of Suicides of Women: 1.1%
- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (Women Cases only): 0.6%
- Other Crimes against Women: 0.1%
- Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives: 36.4%

** The offences viz. Importation of Girls from Foreign Country, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, Commission of Sati Prevention Act 1987, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 altogether have been shown as Other crimes against women.
A. EXPANDED

• The definition for *violence against women* is amplified in article 2 of the United Nations Declaration, which identifies *three areas* in which violence/atrocities commonly take place:
1. In the FAMILY

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs in the family, including battering; sexual abuse of female children in the household; dowry-related violence; marital rape; female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women; non-spousal violence; and violence related to exploitation.
2. Within the COMMUNITY

• Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs within the general community, including rape; sexual abuse; sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution;
3. Perpetrated or condoned by THE STATE

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence **perpetrated or condoned by the State**, wherever it occurs.
A. Violence Against Women in the Family Setting

- Domestic violence
- Traditional practices
- Female genital mutilation
- Son preference
- Dowry-related violence and early marriage
1. Domestic violence

• For women aged 15 to 44 years, violence is a major cause of death and disability.

• Studies show that between one quarter and one half of all women in the world have been abused by intimate partners. Worldwide, 40-70% of all female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.
2. Traditional practices

- Women fall victim to traditional practices that violate their human rights.
- These violations include female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM), dowry murder, so-called “honour killings,” and early marriage.
3. Female genital mutilation

- According to the World Health Organization, 85 million to 115 million girls and women in the population have undergone some form of female genital mutilation and suffer from its adverse health effects.
• Every year an estimated 2 million young girls undergo this procedure.

• It is estimated that more than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGC/FGM in the countries where the practice is concentrated.

Reference: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), WHO, 2016
4. Son preference

- Son preference is the consistent favoring of male children, affects women in many countries.
- Its consequences can be anything from foetal or female infanticide to neglect of the girl child over her brother.
5. Dowry-related violence and early marriage

- In some countries, weddings are preceded by the payment of an agreed-upon dowry by the bride's family. Failure to pay the dowry can lead to violence.
B. Violence Against Women in the Community

- Rape
- Sexual assault within marriage
- Sexual harassment
- Prostitution and trafficking
- Pornography
- Mistreatment of women migrant workers
1. Rape

- Rape can occur anywhere, even in the family, where it can take the form of marital rape or incest.
- It occurs in the community, where a woman can fall prey to any abuser.
- It also occurs in situations of armed conflict and in refugee camps.
India: Female victims of rape

Graph shows total cases of reported rape in 2015, divided along age groups.

Total cases of reported rape: 34,651

Source: NCRB India
2. Sexual assault within marriage

- Sexual assault within marriage is included under this category because it is the community attitudes prevalent in many areas—attitudes held by law enforcement, local leaders, neighbors etc. allow this type of violence to go unpunished.
3. Sexual harassment

- Sexual harassment in the workplace is a growing concern for women. Employers abuse their authority to seek sexual favours from their female co-workers or subordinates, sometimes promising promotions or other forms of career advancement.
Many women are forced into prostitution either by their parents, husbands or boyfriends—or as a result of the difficult economic and social conditions in which they find themselves.
5. Pornography

• Another concern highlighted is pornography, which represents a form of violence against women that "glamorizes the degradation and maltreatment of women and asserts their subordinate function as mere receptacles for male lust."
The migrant workers themselves fare badly, and sometimes tragically. Many become virtual slaves, subject to abuse and rape by their employers.
C. Violence perpetrated or condoned by States

Examples include:

• Custodial violence against women
• Violence against women in situations of armed conflict
• Violence against refugee and displaced women
1. Custodial violence against women

- Violence against women by the very people who are supposed to protect them—members of the law enforcement and criminal justice systems—is widespread.
2. Violence against women in situations of armed conflict

- Rape has been widely used as a weapon of war whenever armed conflicts arise between different parties. It has been used all over the world. Ethnic, cultural, religious, clan, creed, ideology strives!
3. Violence against refugee and displaced women

- Women and children form the great majority of refugee populations all over the world and are especially vulnerable to violence and exploitation. In refugee camps, they are raped and abused by military and immigration personnel, bandit groups, male refugees and rival ethnic groups.
MEDIA
INTERNET
TELEVISION
RADIO
MAGAZINES
NEWSPAPERS
FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA

- Transmits information
- Gate keeping
- Watchdog function
- Agenda setting
- Framing
- Priming
The Crime Record Bureau of India’s website shows that a woman is molested in the country every 20 minutes; a rape occurs every 34 minutes and every 43 minutes an incident of sexual harassment takes place. Every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped and every 93 minutes, a woman is killed.
Media Initiatives....

MEDIA NEEDS TO TAKE AN EXTENDED, BROADER VIEW OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN.

MEDIA MUST BE INSTRUMENTAL IN CONDUCTING A SOCIAL AUDIT ON FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR INCREASING CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN.

MEDIA MUST CREATE AWARENESS AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY OF THE CAUSES AND NATURE OF THE CRIME ITSELF, AND OF THE PREVENTIVE MEASURES WOMEN MUST BE PROJECTED AS PRODUCERS AND NOT MERELY CONSUMERS.
The improvement of women’s conditions, status and image must be defined to be a major objective for media channels. The cheap song-and-dance sequence totally eliminated and the content of such programmes carefully scrutinized in terms of their portrayal of women. Women must not be portrayed in stereotyped images that emphasize passive, submissive qualities and encourage them to play a subordinate secondary role in the family and society.
The principal character in Bernard Shaw’s Pygmalion bemoans, ‘why can’t woman be like man’!
The media can play a salutary and a liberating role to give to the women the distinctive and the exclusive space, which must belong to them to enable them to generate the ethical and moralizing impulses for the entire society.
THANK YOU

Pl. feel free to connect @
drcmvinayakumar@gmail.com
drcmvinayakumarku@yahoo.in