

Sexual Violence in India: an Analysis of Causal Factors and Their Impact on Women's Security

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence and harassment can be a huge fear for women, with this happening, the sense of security for women in India is very minimal. Sexual violence that occurs in India is very high, this is due to the existence of a patriarchal culture, which is already in place considered normal by Indian society. Apart from that, acts of violence and sexual harassment that occur can cause victims to experience very severe trauma. Thus the Goal from this research, namely knowing the factors that cause sexual violence and how it impacts women's safety in India. This research uses a library research approach where the data source obtained is through previous investigations and research. with this approach the results obtained are where patriarchal culture is difficult to eliminate, because in India there is a big emphasis on caste differences which makes men really look down on women. Apart from that, the impact of sexual violence can be makes women feel insecure and experience psychological and psychological disorders.

Keywords: *Sexual violence, India, Women's Security*

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women does not occur only on the national scene but the international scene. In almost every country, women face various forms of sexual harassment. India is one of the countries known for violence against women. India is the second largest country in the world after the People's Republic of China. Violence against women in India is defined as physical or sexual violence perpetrated by men against Indian women. India is one of the most violent countries. 38,947 cases of rape were reported in 2016. The data shows that women's safety is very vulnerable in India. Although there are many laws, the enforcement of laws against violence against women is very weak. (Yonna Beatrix Salamor, 2022).

Because women are often seen as inferior to men, women are often victimised and subjected to ill-treatment. Ultimately, sexual harassment or violence is perpetuated against women because of the value system that considers women inferior and marginalised in society, so that men dominate and enslave women, and women continue to be considered second-class citizens. In India, sexual violence against women is a major problem that reflects deep social and cultural issues. Cases of sexual violence, including rape, have increased rapidly in recent years, drawing attention domestically and internationally. Although there are laws made in India to protect women, they are



often poorly implemented, and many cases of sexual violence still go undetected or unreported (Aulia Putri Sabila, 2023).

The high number of cases of violence suggests that the protection of women is not important. This is due to a number of factors, including legal injustice for perpetrators, lack of healing efforts for physical and psychological victims, and high scepticism towards society's negative stigma towards women. More and more people are becoming victims of rape in India, despite rape being enshrined in the country's constitution and monitored by the media and international organisations (Sabbilina Mareta, 2017). This research aims to find out what are the factors that cause violence and harassment against women in India and how it impacts on women's security in India.

METHODS

In this study the authors used qualitative research methods to find the data needed, where this method is a research process that aims to understand human or social phenomena by producing an in-depth and complex picture that can be communicated through words, reporting detailed perspectives obtained from informant sources.

This research uses a library research approach, which is a data collection technique that uses theoretical understanding of the literature relevant to the research. According to Zed (2004), library studies are carried out in four stages, namely preparing the necessary equipment, making a working bibliography, organising time, reading, and recording research materials. Data were collected through searching and reconstructing various sources, including books, journals, and previous research. Content and descriptive analyses were used in the analysis process. To ensure that proposals and ideas could be supported, the literature obtained from various sources was critically and deeply evaluated.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Factors causing sexual violence in India

India is a Southeast Asian country that still faces many problems with human rights violations against women, such as domestic violence and sexual violence, such as rape, exploitation of women, and discrimination. Unfair treatment of a person based on class, economy, religion, or other factors is called discrimination. This is still seen in India, where women are prohibited from establishing their own identity. Seen as a son or wife by a man, women lose their freedom. Discrimination against women starts at a young age. In India, the rate of violence against women is still high (Nining Kurnia, 2023). India is the highest country in terms of rape. From 2007 to 2011, rape cases increased by 9.2 per cent, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. The number of rape cases in the capital city of Delhi increased by 277 per cent from 572 cases to 2,155 cases in 2016 (Mallapur, 2017). India ranks third highest in the world for rape cases, losing only to the United States and South Africa. (Putrianti, 2021).



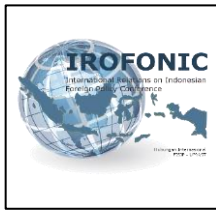
There are several factors that cause sexual violence in India, namely the first in terms of patriarchal cultural factors, where regardless of any factors, this patriarchal culture is very embedded in society. This is due to the biological nature of human beings, with men having a tendency to have greater physical strength, indicated by a greater amount of muscle mass than women. This view makes men superior in many ways (Femy Triastia Hutabarat, 2019). Secondly, in terms of economic factors, although India is the second highest economy in the world, there are also economic inequalities that occur in India. Poverty still needs attention. Crime and violence in the country are on the rise due to a larger population and rising unemployment. Crime rates are higher in poor state settlements compared to developed states (Nining Kurnia, 2023).

Thirdly, there are too few female police officers, where historically, the number of female police officers in India has been much lower than in other Asian countries. As of 2012, only 7% of female police officers in New Delhi were employed, and they were often assigned to non-essential positions that did not involve patrolling, according to the Times of India, of Delhi's 161 district police stations, only one has a female police postmaster. Rape victims are often patronised when they report to male police officers. Fifthly, there is a lack of public safety, when Indian women are alone on the streets, at work and in the streets. Indian women are alone on the streets, at work, or in the marketplace, they are always very wary. A woman usually has no protection outside the home. Even Indian authorities state that public places in the country are not safe for women, and a gang rape took place on a bus. Many roads are poorly lit and there are not many women's toilets (Ida Rosdalina, 2024).

There are 90 rapes per day in India, such as the case that occurred on 1 March 2024 where a Spanish tourist woman named plancong was raped while she was camping with her husband in the Dumka area, Jharkand. where the woman was raped by seven Indian men. the perpetrators not only raped plancong but also persecuted her husband, until now plancong and her husband are each treated in the hospital. The case proves that India is no longer safe for women. So far there are at least three perpetrators who have been arrested by the Indian police. (Lukia Aulia, 2024).

The Impact of Sexual Violence on Women's Security

About 87,000 women in India were intentionally killed as rape victims from 2011 to 2017. About 50,000 of them, or 58 per cent of the total, were killed by their own gang members, their own families, and 30,000 (42%) were killed by rapists with whom they had intimate relationships. Perpetrators usually want to eliminate traces of the rape so that no one knows and reports it to the police (Putrianti, 2021). Victims will experience impacts on three aspects of their lives, namely physical, mental, and social. Sexual violence on women can cause unwanted pregnancies and damage to their body parts, while trauma, mental disorders, and excessive feelings of fear are examples of the psychological impact of sexual violence. from another aspect, victims of sexual violence



also experience social consequences, such as isolation, discrimination in society, and unpleasant treatment (Noviyanti, 2021).

In addition, if sexual violence continues to occur, it can lead to violent behaviour becoming normalised in society. This creates a cycle where violence is considered normal and acceptable. As a result, combating and changing society's perception about violence against women becomes difficult. Then Although there are laws created to protect women from sexual violence, they are often ineffective in practice. Many cases of sexual violence are not taken seriously by law enforcement, and perpetrators often go unpunished. This makes perpetrators feel innocent and reduces public trust in the justice system.

The Indian government has made policies to resolve these cases, the following policies have been issued: first, the Criminal Law Amendment 2013 which tightens penalties for perpetrators of sexual violence, including the death penalty for rape that results in death or serious injury to the victim. In addition, the definition of rape was expanded to include various other types of sexual violence. Second, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Act (2013): This law aims to protect women from sexual harassment occurring in their workplace. It includes the obligation of employers to establish internal committees to handle complaints and create a safe workplace for women (Putrianti, 2021). The policy has been implemented after the brutal rape case of Jyoti Singh or ‘Nirbhaya’ that occurred in 2012.

Patriarchy and the Indian Social System

The strong and entrenched patriarchal culture in India's social structure has long been a foundation that supports gender discrimination and violence against women. Patriarchy in India not only places men as the ultimate authority in the household, but also extends that power into social, economic and political life. This leaves women in a subordinate position, where their role and value are often reduced to domestic functions, such as wife and mother. As a result, women in India often lack equal access to education, employment, and even basic rights, which in turn reinforces their powerlessness in the face of sexual violence.

An aspect that exacerbates violence against women is the caste system that divides Indian society based on rigid social stratification. This system hinders social mobility and often results in women from lower castes being the primary targets of violence, including harassment and rape. Many men, especially from higher castes, feel they have a right over the bodies of women from lower castes as a form of social and sexual domination (Putrianti, 2021). This patriarchy not only disadvantages women, but also reinforces men's control over women through norms that favour men's control over family resources and decisions.

India's patriarchal culture often justifies sexual violence as part of a ‘social norm’ that perpetuates male power. Women who are victims of sexual violence tend to be blamed



by society, where they are thought to have provoked the act of violence through their behaviour or dress. The stigma attached to victims of sexual violence means many cases go unreported, as women fear further discrimination from their family, friends or community (Hutabarat, 2019). This culture of shame and fear further reinforces patriarchal dominance in Indian society, making women more vulnerable to sexual violence.

The role of social institutions such as religion, family and education also reinforce patriarchy in India. Traditional values promoted in these institutions often emphasise women's roles as caregivers and subordinates, while men are seen as leaders and protectors. This creates gender norms that isolate women from more active public roles and prevents them from resisting violence or asserting their rights. Even laws in India, despite some reforms, are often ineffective in protecting women from sexual violence due to weak implementation and enforcement of existing laws (Sabila, 2023).

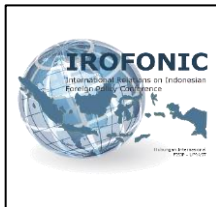
Solutions to Address Patriarchy and Sexual Violence in India

Addressing gender-based violence and patriarchal culture in India requires a holistic approach, with measures involving education, legal reform, and economic and social empowerment for women. One important solution is through inclusive gender education. Early education that instils the value of gender equality and human rights can change the mindset of future generations. By understanding the importance of equality, children will be more sensitive to issues related to gender-based violence and have a deeper understanding of the role of women in society.

More stringent legal reforms are needed to ensure that laws protecting women from violence are effectively implemented. While India already has legislation in place, such as the Protection against Domestic Violence Act (2005), implementation is often weak due to a lack of strict enforcement. Legal reforms should include specialised training for law enforcement officials so that they can handle cases of violence against women more sensitively and professionally. Specialised courts for gender-based violence are also needed to speed up the justice process for victims.

Women's economic empowerment is also an important key in fighting patriarchy. The economic dependence that women have on men often exacerbates their position in a patriarchal society. By having better access to employment opportunities, skills education, and entrepreneurship support, women will be better able to become financially independent. This independence not only helps women escape abusive relationships but also gives them the power to determine their own destiny within a more just social system.

To strengthen this cause, women's representation in government and social institutions must also be increased. With more women involved in leadership positions, both at the government level and in community organisations, pro-women policies can be favoured. Women's representation in decision-making processes will ensure that their voices are



heard and considered in any policies related to social welfare and gender justice. Changing the patriarchal system cannot only be solved through women's intervention. Involving men in the anti-patriarchy movement is another important step. Educating men about the negative impacts of patriarchy on women and men themselves can lead to a more just and equal society. Programmes that teach men to be allies in the fight for gender equality are strategic steps that can accelerate this social change.

CONCLUSION

Human rights violations against women, including domestic violence and sexual violence, such as rape and exploitation, remain a major problem in India. Discrimination against women often starts at a young age, which prevents them from establishing their own identity and limits their freedom. Despite India's growing economy, many cases of sexual violence are due to economic inequality and a strong patriarchal culture. With a significant increase in cases in recent years, data shows that India has the highest rape rate in the world. Factors such as the lack of female police officers, lack of public safety, and stigmatisation of victims make matters worse. Although there are laws made by the government to protect women, weak implementation and enforcement means that many cases of sexual violence are not taken seriously.

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