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## Crime against women in Indian society and the major role of police

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**Abstract**

Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.

**-Kofi Annan**

Crime in India exists in various forms over periods. The crimes committed generally in the society are burglary, murder, kidnapping, trafficking. In the present scenario it is high time to know about the crimes happening against women in the Indian society. The police records show that crime against women is high in India. Prevention of crime is one of the primary duties of the police. Atrocities against women increase in the form of dowry harassment, mental tortures, domestic violence, eve teasing, kidnapping, rape and so on. Protection and prevention of crime against women has become a matter of serious concern to the police officials. India is a country with an age old tradition where everyone enjoyed equal status with due dignity. But the equality faded over times as women started to hold high positions in the society. The honor and respect received by women in the society had an adverse effect in the minds of men and it paved way for crimes against women in order of priority. The position of women and their struggles in India can be seen through different periods. In this paper status of women in different periods, responsibility of police to protect women against crimes, legal provisions for women, some measures to improve the status of women in the society, has been discussed in the descriptive form.

**Keywords:** Crime, trafficking, atrocities, domestic violence, equality

### 1. Introduction

Maintenance of law and order in the society or a state is the primary function of the government. The question of law and order hardly arise with the progress of civilization. In order to maintain law and order, the police force has been in existence since ancient times. The police administration is well described in Kautilya's Arthashastra which provides basic structure and organization. The police have a close link with the government and society, which keeps on changing according to the routine developments. The changes can be for better or worse but it plays a vital role in the society as it reflects like a mirror, if there is a sign of positivity the society reflects the same so as will be the reflections of negativity like violence and conflicts. All these consequences are faced by the public in their day to day life. The police play an important role in maintaining peace in the society and they try hard to create a safe atmosphere in the minds of each and every individual. They have the responsibility not to merely enforce law at the same time they have to maintain the stability of law and order that too in the prevention of crime against women which is very important and crucial. We could see a rapid change in the society as well in the status of women through different periods. The changes have a blend of both good and bad. Here the important concept to be discussed is about the crime against women so the major part of the paper is focused only on the crimes that are happening against women and the role of police who are ultimately responsible to protect and prevent them from the emerging criminal activities.

### 2. Status of women in different periods

Vedic period the status of women in India has been fluctuating. Women in India have passed through two phases that is the period of suppression and the period of liberation.

At times she has been oppressed and at times she has been regarded as the deity. Her status has been changing till now with the changing of society. In the Vedic age women had equal rights in social and religious fields but had limited rights in economic field.

**Epic period** This age can be regarded as the golden periods where women had an honorable status. Most of them were well educated. Women played an effective role in social, religious as well as political life in the then society. In the consequent ages the position of women started to decline.

**Medieval Period** According to ancient Hindu tradition women in India enjoyed considerable freedom until 500 B. C. But during the next thousand years the position of women deteriorated. Education, religious role, widow remarriage was forbidden. However in the fifteenth century women were allowed to educate but their status remind to be low in society.

**Women in modern period** During Middle Ages the position of women was very worst; the oppression of Indian women became an issue of concern. Mahatma Gandhi in his 'Young India' wrote about women's freedom and right. In the 'Discovery of India' by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the contribution of women in our freedom struggle has been well documented. In spite of such great contributions they were considered to be weak and inferior. However with independence, equality of status and opportunity was guaranteed by the Constitution of India which contributed the legal provisions for women and police were given the responsibility to prevent the crime against women.

### **3. Responsibility of Police and Legal provisions for women against crimes**

The police play a major role in protecting women against the crimes they face in their day to day life. Number of crimes can be noted in the recent times against women which are frequently published in social Medias, newspapers. In order to reduce the violations against women, so many laws were invoked. According to the nature of the crime the cases will be registered appropriately by the police. Even though women are not ready to open up their problems out of fear and they are not ready to use the law that is exclusively created for the protection and prevention of women against all the odds they are facing. Women should come forward to know about the legal provisions that are in existence and make use of it through proper channel to get justice. They should be aware of the day to day happenings and be updated in the area of basic law. With this knowledge they can safeguard themselves and also offer help to the needy people in the society. It is the duty of the police to protect women against crime but at the same time the particular victim should also cooperate with the police by offering them with more information regarding what was actually happened. This will be helpful for the police as well as for the victim in further investigation so that the justice will not be delayed. Some of the crimes that are faced by women in their daily routine and the legal provisions are discussed in the following passage.

#### **3.1 Crimes against women**

Domestic violence, Dowry, Child marriage, Sexual harassment, Prostitution, Eve teasing, Verbal abuse, Acid attack, Eve teasing, Honor killing, Rape, Female infanticide, Trafficking.

### **3.2 Women Laws**

#### **3.2.1 The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**

Domestic violence is unquestionably a human rights issue which was acknowledged by "The Vienna Accord of 1994" and "the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (1995)". The United Nations Committee on Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women in its General recommendations has recommended that state parties should act to protect women against violence of any kind, especially occurring within the family. The phenomenon of domestic violence in India is widely widespread but has remained unseen in the public domain. Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects women to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall be liable to fine., it is an offence under section 498A of the Indian Penal Code. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Bill, 2005 have been passed by the Lok Sabha on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2005 and by the Rajya Sabha on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2005 received the assent of the President of India on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2005 and came on the Statute book as the protection of women from domestic violence ACT, 2005 (43 of 2005).

#### **3.2.2 The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**

The Dowry Prohibition Bill have been passed by both the Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President of India on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1961. It came on the Statute book as THE DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT, 1961 (28 of 1961).

#### **3.2.3 The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956**

The suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Bill have been passed by both the Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President of India on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1956 (104 of 1956). By section 3 of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls (Amendment) Act, 1986 (44 of 1986) the nomenclature of the Act has been changed with the effect from 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1987. Now it stands as THE IMMORAL TRAFFIC (PREVENTION) ACT, 1956 (104 OF 1956).

#### **3.2.4 The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986**

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Bill, 1986 was passed by both the Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President of India on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 1986. It came on the Statute book as THE INDECENT representation of women (Prohibition) ACT, 1986 (60 OF 1986).

The above discussed are very few laws in order to make a note that more laws are in practice in the same way as the above mentioned laws. So each and every woman should make an initiative to know these available resources to get early justice.

### **4. Remedies to improve the social status of women**

As already discussed there are various legal provisions available for the protection of women, yet there is no enhancement in using the available resources by women. In order to achieve a desired level of improvement there is a need to take some initiatives. Few initiatives are discussed below:

#### 4.1 Improving the economic position of women

In this competitive world everyone are running towards something in order to live a decent life in the society. Opportunities are open for every individual and most important thing is how we grab the opportunity and make use of it in a positive manner. Here the choice is for both men and women who make use of the available resources in a smart way. Ultimately no one needs to live a dependent life, if an individual is capable of living an independent most of the issues can be solved. If a woman is stable and have courage to live independently she can triumph over many problems with poise. But in our culture most of the women are dependent even though oceans of opportunities are wide open before her eyes. Due to some unavoidable circumstances like marriage, family problem, lack of awareness they are leading a dependent life. But true fact is that women are used to it and they are not ready to come out the cocoon. This concept should be broken and the economic status of women should be improved. Women should feel the bliss of their freedom and self respect.

#### 4.2 Legal Awareness Campaign

Legal awareness programs can be conducted for the public. Through this program it is possible to educate them with the legal provisions meant to protect women. Advertisements can be screened in the places where the public gather in a group like cinema theatres, exhibitions, parks etc., even through newspapers and social Medias. Educative materials like posters and pamphlets can be issued to the public. All these measures can be helpful in empowering women with the capacity to realize her rights. Judicial remedies can be acquired by the women in distress with the help of police officials.

#### 4.3 Harmonization between Police and Public

There should be a cordial relationship between the police and public which is more essential to solve many problems. Because police are the ultimate source for any serious matters to be informed in order to take an initiative steps only then the further procedures will be carried out to the judiciary for proper justice. The hormonal relationship is required so as to solve many problems. This can be achieved through some common channel of support for both the public and police. The police can tag with some NGO'S, volunteers and some other organizations. Through these organizations they can conduct some legal aid camps through which the common and individual problems of women can be taken into consideration and proper action can be taken with the help of police by giving the registered problems by the members of those organizations to the particular jurisdiction police. They can even conduct some counseling programs for women in educational institutes; IT fields etc., on various issues with some of the specially trained police personnel' s.

#### 4.4 All women police stations

There has been an alarming increase in the number of women offenders and victims. Women remain unprotected from law breakers and continued to be neglected in spite of number of laws that are in practice. Many hesitate to complain to the police about the crimes faced by them because of uneasiness and feel timid to open up before a police man. The women police can handle this situation by offering a space to the victim so that they can come out with the actual problem without any hesitation. All crimes related

to police can be handled by the all women police stations for which the government could take initiative to increase the number of all women police stations in each and every district.

#### 5. Significance

In general the crime rate is increasing in the present scenario of the Indian society and this is the reason to choose this topic and the major focus is to know about the crimes against women and the action taken by the police.

#### 6. Objectives

1. To describe the status of women at various periods.
2. To list few crimes against women and offer few legal provisions for women.
3. To suggest some remedies to improve the social status of women.

#### 7. Methodology

The research is in the descriptive form. The main aim of this paper is to make a point about the list of few crimes that are commonly known to each and every individual. Most importantly to create an awareness regarding the role of police and few laws those are available for women in India. In order to have precise study this method has been adopted.

#### 8. Conclusion

In this paper a little effort is taken to ensure the crime against women and the role of police action taken in the Indian society. Even though lots of initiatives has been and still taken the crime rate is been increasing day to day instead of a decline. This is something serious but it is of no use in blaming the government or the law enforcing agencies because every department is having certain limitations and there is no possibility to cross those limits. Each and every department or organization is working under some of the framed rules that can't be broken. The main reason for the increase in criminal activities against women is due to the lack of public cooperation, they are not ready to handle the situation through proper channel. The law enforcing agency can enhance number of laws but those laws should be used with proper guidance at the right time. Unless women come forward to defend themselves, the situation may not improve and crime against women will persist. Women should be strong enough to punish the law breakers legally by cooperating with the police officials and judicial system so as to get quick justice. This initiative can be helpful in strengthening our nation as well.

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