

WOMEN'S STUDIES

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

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Introduction

Today women have to face many challenges in the society that too in a growing and fast developing society. One among them is violence. Violence in any form has been opposed by various leaders, movements and organizations in the recent past. Violence against women is not a new or recent phenomenon, women have been the victim of violence all through the ages, in all societies, cultures, regions or religious communities in the world.

Three Levels of crimes against women

- ❖ The first is the physical battering that leaves a woman bruised and with broken bones.
- ❖ The second kind of violence is the mental violence, where a woman's self-esteem is whittled away through piercing derogatory words till it is systematically eroded.
- ❖ The third kind of violence is where a woman is made to lose her self worth, self-esteem and brought to the level of self-denial.

1. Female Infanticide

When the female baby was born, they murdered the child by giving liquor or spurge milk, paddy with milk, dumping cow dung in the child's mouth and burying them alive.

Usilam Patti in Madurai District, Dharmapuri, Namakkal, Salem, Theni and Ariyalur are the areas where this practice is common.

2. Sati

The general meaning of the word Sati is wife. Thereby proving herself a faithful wife. Those women who ended their lives in flames along with the dead bodies of their husbands. The wife burning alive with her husband's dead body is called Sati. There was a misbelief that instead of suffering after the death of their husbands, her death with him would take her to heaven. This foolishness was one of the reasons for spreading out this evil custom.

Those who did not die with their husbands, should not beautify themselves, they should remove their Jewels shave their head and should wear only white dress. Sati was not universal in Tamil country. It was confined mostly to Tanjore and Trichirappalli districts alone, though a few cases occurred in other districts too.

Sati system



3. Child Marriage

It was a more serious crime than sati. While child marriage plunged a girl into a few minutes of suffering from the moment of her birth till her death, as child wife, child mother and very often a child widow. This custom was very common in the 18 century among the Hindus and Muslims.

The marital age for girls was fixed as 7 to 10. The family which could not marry off their female child before 10 years was considered as disgrace to that family. So this evil practice became a recognized custom to determine their social status and save the virginity of the girls.

Child Marriage



4. Ill-sorted marriages

Another evil connected with Hindu marriages was ill-sorted marriages. The census report of the Madras presidency, 1891. The whole population 19.6 percent were widows nearly 1/5 of the population.

5. Devadasi System

Another important evil practice on women is the devadasi system. The status of women was further lowered by the introduction of the devadasi system. Devadasis were a class of women who were supposed to have been dedicated to the service of temples. During the simple ceremony called 'Pottukattu or Trinket tying', the girl was married to the God in the temple; she should devote herself to the service of God. After the sacred marriage, they were not allowed to have any further marriage with any human being.

Dance was the main occupation of the devadasis in the temple. Devadasis also experts in many arts, they knew singing, dancing, drawing, music etc. In later days the devadasis were also obliged to do personal services to the kings in times when their wives were pregnant or away. In later days, they became an entertainment object to fulfil the lust of the men.



6. Polygamy

A man marrying many wives is called polygamy. The reason for marrying many women was that they did not have child at all; did not have male child or the wife is ill not suitable for family life and also misunderstanding with wife. Islam allowed a man to marry five wives. Generally the kings had more than hundred wives. In the medieval period, polygamy was uncontrollable.

7. The custom of wearing purdah

There was no custom of wearing purdah, in the ancient India. After the arrival of Muslims to India, Indian women also learnt this custom from the Muslim women. This custom grew up in Hindu society to save their beautiful wives from other men. Because of this the women lost communications with the outside world.

8. Kidnapping and Abduction

Kidnapping and abduction have become an everyday problem in our society. Many are murdered after being kidnapped for fear of being prosecuted or punished. The two most important motives of abduction are sex and marriage. Abduction with an economic motive constitutes hardly one-tenth of the total abduction.

9. Ragging and Eve Teasing

Ragging means display of noisy, disorderly conduct doing any act which causes or likely to cause physical or psychological harm to raise apprehension or fear or shame or embarrassment to a student in any educational institution.

10. Rape

Rape is the most brutal form of aggression against women and it shakes the foundation of life of the victim. Rape is the only crime in which the victim faces more degradation and social unacceptability and is often described as “Deathless shame” or “Living death”. Age-wise, the percentage of victims of rape is highest in the age group of 16 to 30 years that is 64.1%. The victims below 10 years are 2.6%, victims between 10 and 16 years are 20.5%, and victims above 30 years are 12.8%. Even deaf and dumb, lunatic and blind, and women beggars are not spared.

11. Dowry Deaths

Before the marriage or during the marriage, giving money, jewels, costliest things to the bridegroom's family for the well being of the bride is called dowry. In Hindu society, the dowry was called 'Kanya Sulgam', 'Stri Danam', and 'Thatchina'. Dowry system causes many social problems to the bride's family. So the society started to hate the birth of the female child. The cause of women being ill-treated for not bringing good dowry arrears in the dowry and dissatisfaction about the dowry are very common. They are tortured by the husband's family members in many ways

12. Domestic Violence

It is also known as domestic abuse or spousal abuse. It occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to psychologically dominate another. Domestic violence occurs in all cultures, people of all races, ethnicities, religions, sexes and all classes. Domestic violence is perpetrated by both men and women. Domestic violence has many forms, including physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, economic deprivation and threats or violence. Violence can be criminal and physical assaults like hitting, pushing, shoving etc.

Nature and forms of Domestic Violence

1. Physical
2. Sexual
3. Emotional
4. Psychological Violence
5. Economic Violence
6. Intimidation
7. Wife-Battering

Causes of Wife-Battering Violence

1. Argument Over Money
2. Jealousy and suspicion of the women's character
3. Instigation by in laws
4. House work
5. Alcobal
6. Women's desire to work outside the home or women's high self-esteem (see thinks too much of herself)
7. Disputes over children
8. Extra marital affairs on the part of the husband

Conclusion

Women are suffering due to domestic violence in a number of ways by their husbands and in laws like wife battering, scolding, denying of food, ill treatment etc. The cause for such behaviour was informed as alcoholism, gambling, extramarital relationship, suspicious nature and to avoid giving money for household expenses.