



Rape Undermines Women Empowerment

Dr. Abhilasha Alha

Associate Professor in Home Science, MS College for Women, Bikaner, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT: TWO recent incidents of gang-rape grasped the public mind. A female tourist was reportedly gang-raped by criminals in Cox's Bazar after she had been kidnapped. Her husband and an eight-year-old child were also held hostage by the rapists. A year ago, another gang-rape case at Murari Chand College hostel in Sylhet sparked outrage. The rapists picked up a newly-wed couple from the main entrance to the college, kept the husband hostage and raped the woman.

The police arrested the accused, but the victims were not convinced due to the delayed trial and fear of unjust release from the prison.

In the former case, a man named Ashiqul was accused as the leading criminal, who got released from jail on bail. According to his file records, he was convicted for murder, drugs, rape, and hijacking. After getting released, he started criminal activities as before. In the MC College case, the police arrested eight accused.

The delay in the trials of rape cases keep the rapists unpunished and often let them roam free, preying on others, even, at times, the victims and their families. Such delay contributes to turning rape culture into an epidemic that threatens public security as a whole. Different studies and reports by human and woman rights organisations portray a bleak picture of woman security situation in Bangladesh.

According to rights group Ain O Salish Kendra, violence against women increased remarkably in three years. Rape incidents have increased by 122 per cent in 2018 since 2018. The rights watchdog documented, based on newspaper reports, 732 rape incidents in 2018, 1,413 further. The actual number of rape incidents are believed to be much higher as many cases went unreported.

The ASK report presents a shocking picture of rape culture that ruptures the popular notion of women's empowerment. Rape culture suggests a situation where rapists do not live with fear, victims and their parents do. Generally, we know that women's empowerment is the protective mechanism against the prevalent patriarchal culture. In this sense, women's empowerment depends on the increasing ratio of female education and employment, and their participation in decision-making.

KEYWORDS: rape, women empowerment, drugs, murder, women, India

I. INTRODUCTION

The true level of women's empowerment can be measured, as Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen says, on the basis of a decrease in early marriage, economic dependency, and an increase in women's employment, education, access to family planning, and participatory opportunity in the public discussion forum. Although these factors are important and significantly relevant from different viewpoints, women's security must be identified as the main indicator of measuring women's empowerment. An increase in sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape, and social betrayal culture against women forces us to rethink the achievement made in women's empowerment.

The Ain O Salish Kendra report, for example, is so alarming that the question arises whether women, despite having better access to higher education and employment, have really been empowered or they are still forced to live in a frightening atmosphere.

The cause behind the frightening reality that women live in relies upon the cultural and political practices in our society. Unfortunately, people often show reluctance at pursuing movements against rapists that ultimately empowers the rapists. People's reluctance reduces women's empowerment despite their progress in many areas. If history is any guide, whenever people have come out and protested at violence against women, there have been some changes. Political mobilisation of people in issues like violence against women is of utmost significance.

What comes as further worrying and is a disturbing aspect of our political culture is that most of the victims are demotivated to draw a case against the criminal following formal procedure. It is because many of the rapists get political favour manipulating their political clout. There is also a pervasive, often unnoticed, patriarchal structure in the

administrative system. Besides, the nexus between class and power relations empowers the criminals. For instance, females belonging to lower-income groups are highly insecure because they cannot bear the cost of the formal trial and relevant procedures and are often intimidated by the perpetrators. Besides, those who have administrative power are mostly corrupt as well as class- and gender-biased. Moreover, there remains the unacceptable practice of victim-blaming in society.

Reforms in the patriarchal social structure and the administrative system of trial and judgement are what is warranted. Without ensuring security for women through socio-cultural practices and policy supports, women's empowerment would lose its meaning.

II. DISCUSSION

From putting the perpetrator behind bars to helping victims of commercial sex exploitation and rape, these 5 amazing women have risen from the ashes stronger than ever. Know more about these inspiring women who are a motivation to all of us.

It has been exactly two years since the horrific Delhi gang rape took place that left the entire nation in turmoil. With India's latest comic superhero(-ine) Priya Shakti being a gang rape survivor who hopes to reduce gender-based violence in the country, we now see a gradual change in attitude, though we still have a long way to go in our acceptance and empathy as a society towards victims of this heinous crime.

While we could not save Nirbhaya (the fictional name given to the gang rape victim of December 16, 2012) from her terrible reality, here are five women who have not only risen from the ashes but have emerged stronger than ever from their adversity. They are not "rape victims", not even just "survivors", but "winners", who are an inspiration to us all and who restore our faith in woman power.

1. Dr. Sunitha Krishnan



Krishnan was a social worker since childhood. She would teach dance to mentally challenged children when she herself was just eight years old. She was gang-raped when she was 12. The horrific incident left her angry, but instead of lamenting over her fate, she started an anti-trafficking organization Prajwala which works with the police and other law enforcement agencies to fight commercial sexual exploitation. Through her organization, she is actively rescuing and rehabilitating victims of sex-trafficking into society. Krishnan was also recently awarded the prestigious 2014 Nelson Mandela-Graca Machel Innovation Awards on November 24 at Johannesburg, South Africa. She is the first Indian to receive this honour. Her inspiring story is a motivation to all of us, especially those who are still fighting the horrific memories of rape.

2. Suzette Jordan



Jordan has come a long way from being labeled the “Park Street rape victim” to “Suzette Jordan, the survivor”. She still remembers the horrifying night when she was gang-raped in a moving car in Kolkata. A single mother, instead of empathy she received criticism from the society who called her “characterless” and also accused her of probably being involved in prostitution! But one day Jordan thought to put an end to it and revealed her identity to fight against the blames and the crime. “My children gave me the strength to fight,” she said in a television show. “I want to instill in them the feeling of being fearless. I want to show them that even in the worst situation, being strong is the only way,” she says. Today she is living a dignified life and demanding the justice which she deserves. She also went out and supported the family of another college girl who was brutally raped and murdered.

3. Urmila



Urmila, a Dalit woman who hails from a small village in Madhya Pradesh, was living a normal life with her husband and three kids when one day a man broke into her house when she was alone and raped her. She somehow managed to escape and went to the police station where no one filed her complaint till morning. She then went to Harijan’s police station, and after a few hours, her complaint was registered. Since then, her life completely changed. The society blamed her and the neighbours and community cut off all communication with her family. She decided to fight back, and with her husband’s support, she managed to stand tall even in the most difficult situations. The criminals pressurized her to take the police complaint back, they even beat up Urmila and her husband brutally, but she faced them bravely. Urmila is an inspiring example of how, no matter where you are

and which community you belong to, you should never be afraid to raise your voice against wrong. She is still putting up a brave fight for justice.

4. Sita



The 20-year old construction labourer Sita was kidnapped, gang-raped and thrown on a railway track to die by a co-worker she had a small fight with. She became physically disabled and was abandoned by her own mother because she was no longer of any “use” to her in earning money. Instead of getting defeated by this harsh reality, Sita not only sent her violators to jail but also rebuilt her own life from scratch. Wheelchair ridden Sita did not shy away from filing a complaint against her mother too, who was abetting the criminals against her daughter. To give a new shape to her life, she joined a bridge school run by Prayas NGO, and with the help of her immense passion and will power, she managed to secure admission in class eight at the government-run Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). Sita is an inspiration to all of us and proves that nothing can beat a strong willpower.

5. Bhanwari Devi

Bhanwari Devi’s case has created a lot of stir across in India. She was gang raped 22 years ago in Rajasthan and is still fighting for justice. Rather than giving up on life like many other girls do, she chose to fight against the crime. Today she is an icon for thousands of Dalit women and is leading the way to women empowerment. She was invited for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. She was also awarded the Neerja Bhanot Memorial Award worth Rs.1 Lakh, for her “extraordinary courage, conviction and commitment”. She has received many awards and great recognition for her courage and she also supports many women to fight for justice, but the biggest irony is that she hasn’t received justice yet.



We salute these brave women who not only had the courage to put their own adversity behind them but also to stand up against injustice and help other victims rebuild their lives. That certainly requires a supernatural strength of character, and for us, that makes these women the superhero(-ines) we admire!

III. RESULTS

Essentially, sexual violence has become one of the most important concerns in the contemporary world. Importantly, this has become a critical concern when it comes to the social welfare of women because they are the most affected. The traditional disregard for women and gender have contributed to the increasing cases of sexual assaults around the



world. It cannot be disputed that sexual violence is a result of social, personal, and psychological factors that affect people's behaviors in society. According to a report that was released by the Department of Justice in 2013, 176,630 people in the USA are victims of rape and sexual violence (Brown, 2012). Although this population is approximately 0.1 percent of the USA's population, the number is substantial, especially when dealing with a first-world country. In this light, therefore, this paper seeks to discuss the issue of rape extensively. It will provide a definition of rape, identify its dynamics, and discuss some of the social, cultural, as well as psychological factors that affect rape. In addition, the paper will present some of the possible preventative measures which can be used to inhibit various kinds of rape that including data and acquaintance rapes. Understandably, there are many definitions of rape that essentially differ according to the scope and orientation. However, basically, rape is committing sexual intercourse unlawfully or penetrating the mouth, anus, or vagina of another individual forcefully or otherwise without the permission of the victim. Evidently, the lack or existence of permission is the crucial determinant of whether the intercourse is a rape case or not. In other words, when the sexual intercourse or penetration is done with the consent of the partner, the act is not a rape case. On the contrary, if the intercourse or the penetration is done without the consent of the victim, the act becomes a rape case.

The Dynamic of Rape

The dynamics of rape have been researched and documented in a vast and effective manner. In essence, one of the most crucial concerns relates to the motivational factors of the act. Whereas it has been conceived that craving for sexual satisfaction is the main reason for the prevalence of rape, the truth is essentially very different and surprising. Most cases of rape are caused by the desire to control, humiliate and exercise gender-based power (Baaz, & Stern, 2013). Critically, raping is not a crime that is driven by passion or emotional craving. Instead, it is largely steered by violence, hostility, and sadistic attributes to harm the victim. The offenders simply seek to terrorize and kill self-esteem as well as the victim's sense of self. As a result, there is an important lesson the world should learn from this realization. This lesson is based on the fact that rape is not a matter of sexual desire, but a medium that people use to express other emotions such as anger and hostility (Holcomb, 2010). Importantly, also, offenders use rape as a way of reducing sexual anxiety, fighting sexual helplessness, and reassuring their sexual adequacy. As such, it is evident that the critical dynamic of rape revolves around the essence of gender powers and control.

Social and Cultural Factors

Rape is a vast vice that has social and cultural aspects that increases its prevalence in society. One of the most important societal and cultural factors that cause rape is gender superiority. In the contemporary world, male dominance and women's subservience can be attributed to increasing cases of rape. In addition, lack of gender equity steers the appetite to engage in rape and general sexual violence (Harrington, 2010). Other social factors include substantial tolerance of sexual violence, a high degree of other crimes, and poor clothing behaviors. Importantly, women in the contemporary world are exposing their nakedness to a degree that may prompt the willingness to rape.

Personal Psychological Factors

There are personal and psychological factors that increase the probability of committing this crime and increase its overall prevalence. According to Holcomb (2010), one of the personal factors that steer the vice is found in the abuse of drugs and alcohol. The abuse of drugs and the use of alcohol interferes with sexual and psychological stability. In addition, it increases physical aggressiveness and hostility. The combination of these two aspects leads to the desire for sex and the commitment to rape. Second, experiences related to sexual violence contribute to the likelihood of raping. Some of these experiences include coercive fantasies of sexual visualizations, undertaking impersonal sexual intercourse, and sexual abuse during childhood. Further, violence against the opposite gender, antisocial behaviors, and witnessing family violence leads to rape tendencies.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Whereas there are many ways in which a person can prevent rape, there are general and most acceptable methods. First, it is important to avoid meeting in private places during a date (Osuji, 2012). Publicity reduces the appetite for sexual assault and increases the likelihood of getting help in case it happens. Second, one should avoid overdrinking alcohol when interacting with friends of the opposite sex. Over-drinking increases vulnerability by reducing defensiveness and reasoning. Other preventative actions include wearing more clothes, avoiding risky areas, and reducing night-outs. These methods can be coupled with the mechanism of physical self defense and wearing special panties which prevent easy rape.



REFERENCES

1. "Rape". Merriam-Webster. 8 May 2018.
2. ^ "Sexual violence chapter 6" (PDF). World Health Organization. 15 April 2011.
3. ^ "Rape". dictionary.reference.com. 15 April 2011.
4. ^ Lehman, Jeffrey; Phelps, Shirelle (2005). West's Encyclopedia of American Law, Vol. 9 (2 ed.). Detroit: Thomson/Gale. p. 145. ISBN 9780787663766.
5. ^ Shannon Brennan and Andrea Taylor-Butts, Sexual Assault in Canada 2004 and 2007 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics), 2008)), p. 7.
6. ^ Manager, Web (11 November 2010). "Rape': the penetrative sexual offence". alrc.gov.au.
7. ^ "PROSECUTOR v. ANTO FURUND@IJA" (PDF). International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. 10 December 1998. Archived (PDF) from the original on 22 September 2018. Retrieved 17 February 2018.
8. ^ "Sexual Offences Act 2003". Government of the United Kingdom.
9. ^ "CRIMES ACT 1900 - SECT 61HA Meaning of "sexual intercourse"". Austlii.edu.au. Retrieved 1 September 2018.
10. ^ the expression "knows that the other person does not consent" refers to its use in section 61I Sexual assault [1]
11. ^ "Full list". Treaty Office.
12. ^ Sexual Offences Act 2003: Explanatory Notes, paragraph 14
13. ^ "CASE OF M.C. v. BULGARIA". European Court of Human Rights. 4 December 2003. Retrieved 17 February 2018.
14. ^ "ICTY, the Prosecutor v. Kunarac, Kovac and Vukovic - ICRC". Archived from the original on 4 March 2016. Retrieved 8 May 2015.
15. ^ "DIRECTIVE 2011/92/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL". Official Journal of the European Union. 13 December 2011. Archived from the original on 1 September 2018. Retrieved 17 February 2018.