

Sexual Exploitation in India: Types, Causes, and Solutions

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Abstract:-Women all around the world are sexually harassed at some point in their lives, whether at home, in the marketplace, in the company of family and friends, in schools and educational institutions, or at work. Women become easy targets for sexual assault and are often unable to speak up owing to societal pressure on the fear of defamation. A culture and tradition of Patriarchy in Indian society can be seen as a major factor and cause for this societal evil. Women now have started voicing their concerns protesting against these exploitations and fighting for their rights. This shift in attitude, especially with the implementation of some punitive punishments and women's hotlines, might be considered as a positive step toward protecting and maintaining female integrity. This paper exclusively tries to bring out different stages of exploitations women are subjected to throughout their life and highlight the various forms of sexual harassment and assault that have now become common place. The paper then explores various factors that have contributed to this issue and delves into patriarchy as a major underlying factor, and continues on to discuss various legal and remedial measures which could significantly reduce these types of exploitations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Patriarchy is a social system in which the male gender role acts as the primary authority figure central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege and entails female subordination. They also hold power in the domain of the family, as fatherly figures. There are many patriarchal societies that are patrilineal which means that the male lineage inherits the property and title. The analysis of patriarchy and its effects is a major topic within the social sciences and humanities.

In India, Patriarchy has stunted the growth and development of society. There are numerous cases of girls committing suicide because of vicious patriarchal social norms and belief. Women go in depression because of brutal social norms and the suicide rate of women is 40% to 60% higher as compared to men. In the simpler sense the term, Patriarchy, means 'the absolute rule of the father or the eldest male member over his family'. These were understood regarding the family and household; propinquity and caste; culture and religion, and the Indian state, whose policies have a dynamic bearing on all other social structures. The household thus emerged as an important constituent of both production and patriarchy. In most countries of the world, women face very limited legal obstacles against their participation in different levels of

political processes yet in comparison with their male counterparts, women's political roles and participation are generally less significant. The participation of women is 30% in ministerial positions and only 17% of the total women population in India is an active member in parliament. Of India's 28 states, only West Bengal has a female Chief Minister.

Understanding the gender divides, it is also important to recognize that women's position in global gender discourse is not static but dynamic. The realm of reproduction was viewed through the lens of a sex-gender system, which was linked to concrete social structures and interactions, such as kinship networks in this case. Kin networks, like the family, were considered as crucial to both male dominance in familial and social situations, as well as a woman's position, or lack thereof, at home and beyond. In addition to this, patriarchy has also resulted in Educational Deprivation of women and of course Sexual Assaults. Sexual Assault extends across various forms from verbal and physical to indecent gestures which are becoming the part and parcel of females at the work place. There are also now multiple legal and tangible measures existing and which if introduced, can help in bringing down the sexual crime rate against women.

II. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The current study "Sexual Exploitation in India: Types, Causes, and Solutions" is focussed only on the Indian society within a global context. It is based on secondary data collected from different sources, including a number of research papers, articles and books. A thorough reading was done of all sources based on the topic and information, accumulated, triangulated and then detailed. The research tool used for analysis of data amassed from different sources for current study is content analysis and the research method applied to the present study is a descriptive research method.

➤ *Stages of women exploitation*

In India, a large population of women continue to be harassed throughout their lives, regardless of their social position, caste, or educational background. They have been victims of exploitation on many levels, including physically, socially, morally, intellectually, and monetarily, for a long time. Women are oppressed and exploited from the very start of their life.

From the research paper "WOMEN EXPLOITATION IN EVERY PHASE OF HER LIFE AND INEFFECTIVENESS OF LAWS IN INDIA" (Kumari Jyoti September 2016), we get 6 phases of woman's life.

➤ *Pre-birth stage of women –*

Even today girls are seen as a burden to society and despite being illegal, sex- selective abortion is taking place. In the modern era, girls are still considered as a liability, who will not bring social and economic productivity to the society because they are not as strong as men. Effectively, girls hold a negative construct in the Indian household even before they are born.

➤ *Infancy Stage of Women (Ages 1-6) –*

In this stage girls are the victims of incessant ignorance towards proper care, nutrition, health facilities education and exposure. This is especially true in the case of rural families, which tend to shower extra care and they exert extra efforts when it comes to the upbringing of a baby boy. The adverse status of women in our society is due to the lack of proper methods in nurturing the girl child from their infant stage, which tends to make them weak and feel less confident.

➤ *Childhood stage of women (Ages 6-12) –*

This is the stage where the girl is subject to massive gender discrimination. Boys are given every type of freedom such as friendship, travel, curfews, or even education. While the position of girl remains to be detrimental. They have to bear extensive restrictions, psychological abuse, often sexual abuse, and are more likely to be beaten by their parents for the smallest of mistake or expenses.

At this age, Girls also face the danger of child trafficking for labour or sex. This is a significant danger that is prevalent as a global nexus. Moreover, young girls are often not educated and put to work in dangerous industrial and domestic environments. Studies (Tripathy, 2003) have shown that there is still child labour in rural India and the majority of the child labour is female. Thus, even laws by the government such as the Child Labour Act of 186 have proven to not have made an impact due to the societal and incumbent mentalities or norms.

➤ *Adolescent Stage (Ages 13-19)-*

The adolescent age is the very crucial age when children are matured and are aware of social norms. Here girls are forced to take over the home and kitchen instead of having them study at school. She faces many kinds of limitations including dress code, use of mobiles phones, outside movements etc. Girls even often have to face early child marriage as decided by their family. As defined before, trafficking and sex trade continues to become a larger danger, where several young girls are victimized and sold for providing sex and beauty. These societal conditions not only cause physical and developmental issues but often lead to psychological disorders within young girls.

➤ *Reproductive Stage (Ages 19-45)–*

Several times girls are forced for marriage just to maintain their and their family's status in the society. Very often young married women tend to live under a threat of death from their in-laws and new family members due to patriarchal norms and customs. Sometimes, as a result of dowry or simple show of masculinity, women tend to be emotionally and physically tortured, and often face abuse,

domestic violence, marital rape and honour killings (if they try to escape).

In some families' girls are mistreated if they are unable to bear a boy child or a child at all. If a woman produces a girl child, they are accused by their family members for the same. Although this is not true in the case of females who are socio-economically established. Interestingly, there are cases where women are intentionally insisted to do sexually offensive works to live more and more economically comfortable life.

The millennium project report of 2005 states that "gender equality remains an unfulfilled goal". The report recognizes the need to include specific intervention to address gender inequality (Johnson H, Ollus N & Nevala S, 2008). This means that every part of India is incorporated by gender bias which needs to be taken care of.

➤ *Elderly stage –*

Women are helpless in this stage due to the diminishing of sexual beauty and not having had exposure to good education, work, or experiences. They tend to remain in a submissive role for the rest of their life and very often continue to be the victims of domestic violence and homicide. Therefore, it is important to have a vigilant upbringing from the birth of the child especially a girl child.

Thus, the history of women's life is a garland of stigma or misery. There is no stage at which she gets honour due to their traditional oppressed life lead without protest. (Basu Roy, March 2012)

III. FORMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Women are exploited in a variety of ways and by different people and these crimes are harmful and immoral not only to women, but to society as a whole. The crimes include prostitution, trafficking, adultery, kidnap, rape, unlawful detention, and murder. These are examples of crimes involving sexual exploitation for financial gain. On the other hand, there are crimes involving women's property such as dishonest misappropriation, criminal breach of trust, domestic violence, dowry extortion, and outraging a woman's modesty.

From the paper "Sexual abuse and exploitation of women in India – Dimensions, recent incidences & legal framework" (Dr. Rastogi Himanshu October 2018), we get different forms of exploitation in the form of sexual, verbal and emotional abuse.

➤ *Sexual Assaults-*

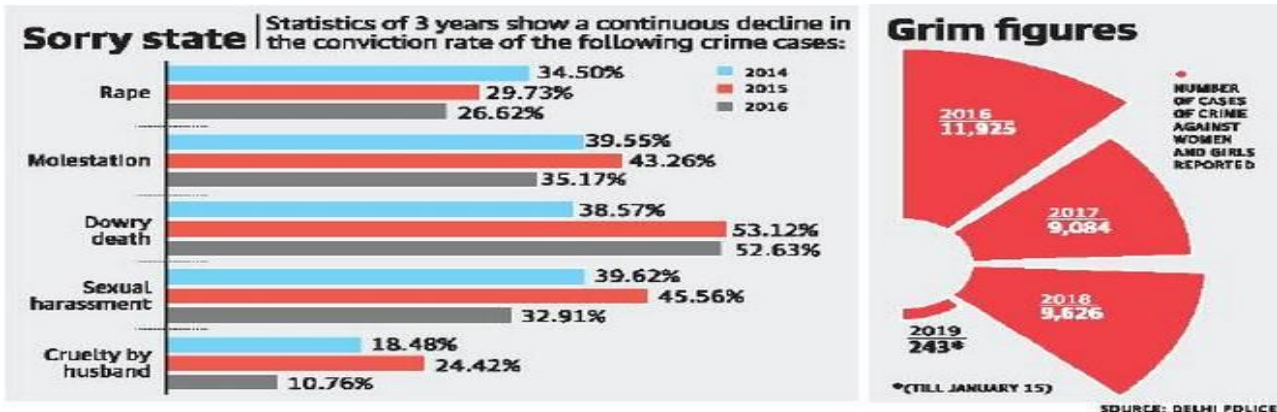
Sexual assault, often known as sexual violence or maltreatment, is any sort of sexual interaction or contact, including rape, that occurs without the consent of a female. Consent is an unequivocal affirmation of sexual behaviour. Consent does not imply not saying "no." It explicitly implies saying "yes". Sexual contact without consent is considered rape or sexual assault. Limited contact including touching can also be considered assault. Non-Contact actions such as

‘flashing’ or forcing of sexual imagery is also considered as a sexual assault.

➤ *Sexual Harassments –*

Sexual harassment occurs when someone at work, at home, or at school makes unwanted sexual advances or

seeks sexual favours from women. It also includes verbal or physical acts that may have a negative impact on her career, family, or education. When these behaviours occur without the victim's consent, they are considered sexual harassment. Sexual harassers might be men or women, and they might be managers, co-workers, landlords, or anybody else.



➤ *Physical Abuse-*

Any physical force that injures or puts someone's health in jeopardy is considered physical abuse. Shaking, burning, choking, hair-pulling, striking, slapping, kicking, and any sort of harm with a weapon like a knife or a gun are all examples of physical abuse. Threats to hurt, injure children, or family members can also be included. Restraining someone against their will, such as by tying them up or shutting them in a room, is also an example of abuse.

According to the US Department of Justice rape is defined as “the penetration, no matter how small, of the vagina or anus with a body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the agreement of the victim,”. Rape is virtually invariably committed by men, despite the fact that other types of sexual assault can be committed by both men and women. The majority of women who are raped are sexually assaulted by someone they know, such as a past or current romantic partner, a friend, or a family member. As mentioned, consent is defined as an unequivocal "yes" to any sort of sexual action. When a female is inebriated, intoxicated, or sleeping and unable to give a consent, which is also considered as a rape.

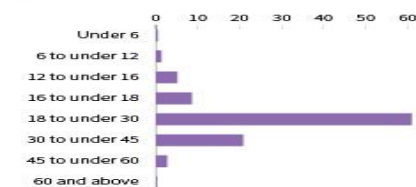
➤ *Rape-*

Rape cases in India

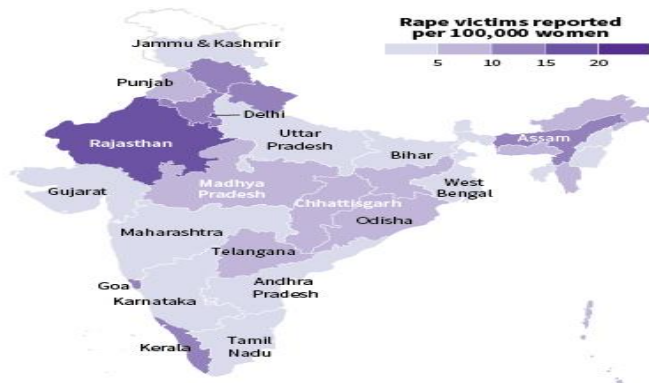
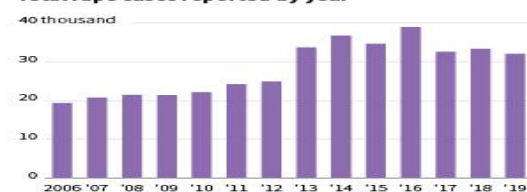
More than 145,000 rape cases were pending trial in Indian courts by end-2019, the latest year for which data is available.

Rape cases with female victims by age group

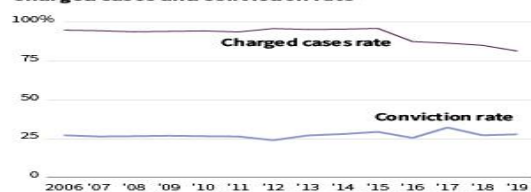
Out of the over 32,000 reported victims in 2019, about 15 percent of the victims are children.



Total rape cases reported by year



Charged cases and conviction rate



Note: Crime statistics in India follows the primary offence rule. In an event where the victim is raped and murdered, the incident will be recorded as a murder and not rape, because the primary offence is what the government considers the "most heinous crime" - in this case, murder. Such cases will be excluded from data about rape. Figures for West Bengal are from 2018.

Source: National Crime Records Bureau; Census of India 2011.

Staff, 30/09/2020

REUTERS

According to the most recent government data, more than 32,500 cases of rape were reported to the police in 2017, an average of 90 per day. Only approximately 18,300 rape cases were resolved in India in 2017, leaving more than 127,800 cases unresolved at the end of the year.

Brutal rape and violence against women who report it have earned India the dubious distinction of being one of the world's most dangerous countries for women. Here are a few examples:

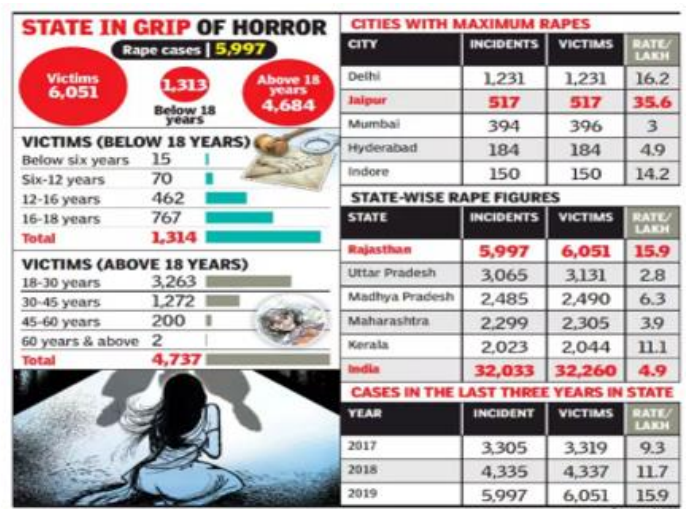
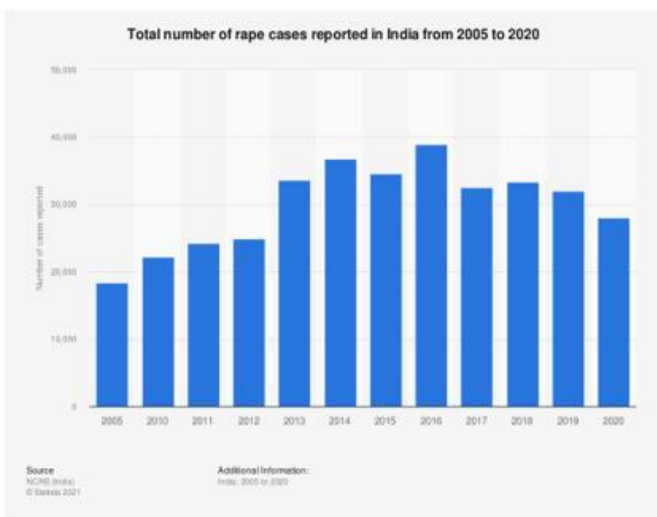
Jan 2018: In Kathua, northern India, an 8-year-old Muslim girl is drugged, held captive in a temple, and sexually raped for a week before being strangled and bashed to death with a stone. Six individuals were found guilty of the crime, including a Hindu priest and three police officers. Three people were sentenced to life in prison.

July 2018: Eighteen men have been charged in Chennai with regularly rapping a 12-year-old girl, sedating her with narcotics, and then assaulting her in vacant apartments in the block over a seven-month period.

July 2019: When a truck collided with the automobile in which they were travelling, a young woman who accused Uttar Pradesh state politician Kuldeep Singh Sengar of raping her in 2017 and her lawyer were gravely injured. Two of the woman's aunts were also killed in the car. Sengar denies the rape and any involvement in the car crash.

Nov 2019: The veterinarian's burnt remains were discovered beneath a flyover near Hyderabad. On suspicion of gang rape and murder, four men have been arrested.

Dec 2019: A gang of men, including the alleged rapist, set fire to a 23-year-old rape victim as she made her way to court to attend a hearing in the case in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district, police said.



- According to NRCB, 2019 showed a decline in rape cases as compared to 2018 but then also the rape cases in some states were rampant.
- Every 16 minutes, a woman is raped in India, and every four minutes, a woman is subjected to abuse by her in-laws.
- Every day in 2019, 88 rape cases were reported in the country. The Dalit minority accounted for 11% of the total 32,033 rape cases reported in the year.
- The highest number of rape incidents were reported in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, according to the data. In 2018, Rajasthan recorded 6,000 rape cases, while Uttar Pradesh had 3,065 cases.

➤ *Sexual Coercion-*

Sexual coercion occurs when someone is pressured, manipulated, threatened, or pushed into a sexual activity that they don't want to do. Coercion can make a person believe she owes someone sex, such as someone threatening to publish stories about the victim if she does not have sex with them, or someone in a position of authority like boss, property management, loan officer, or professor, for example, uses their power or influence to exert pressure.

➤ *Stalking-*

Stalking is defined as repeated contact that causes a person to feel threatened or harassed. Someone may stalk the victim by frequently following or harassing them by sending nasty messages. Stalkers may also utilise technology to stalk, such as sending unsolicited emails or messages on social media. In her lifetime, one out of every six women has been stalked.

➤ *Emotional and Verbal Abuse-*

Emotional and verbal abuse can start out of nowhere. Some abusers may appear normal at first, but once a relationship is established, they may begin to abuse. In the beginning of a relationship, some abusers may purposely give a lot of affection and attention, including compliments and requests to become their life partner. The abuser frequently tries to make the other person feel emotionally linked to them, as if they are "against the world" together. Abusers gradually begin to insult or threaten their victims, and they seek to exert control over various aspects of their lives. When this shift in behaviour occurs, victims may be surprised and perplexed. This indicates a red flag for the victim that they should stay away from the culprit.

➤ *Dating Violence-*

Dating violence is physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a romantic or sexual partner. It happens to women of all races and ethnicities, incomes, and education levels. It also happens across all age groups and in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Some people call dating violence domestic abuse, especially when one lives with their partner. Despite reinforcing Dating Violence through constitutional protection, women still continue to be the victim of Dating Violence.

Though women's standing in India has always been one of respect and reverence, the harsh reality is that they are still fighting for their own identity, shouting for their voices to be heard, and fighting for their own self-esteem. Every day, they straddle the line between fear and independence. It is high time for women to take control of their lives and obtain a respectable and dignified place in Indian society. It is necessary to raise awareness among women and society, as well as to successfully enforce their equal rights. Importantly, crimes against Women should become a highly punishable offence.

IV. CAUSES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sexual harassment has a variety of causes that vary from person to person and context to scenario. This explanation can only touch on a few of the most important variables. Many of the causes are interconnected, and they are tied to societal and corporate culture and beliefs, as well as the positions, relative power, and status of the men and women involved.

The factors considered in this paper are socialisation, credibility and victim blaming, moral values divorce and cultural differences.

➤ *Socialisation –*

Men and women's perceptions of themselves and others are profoundly influenced by their upbringing. For instance, in a culture where it is, or was until recently, "OK" to discriminate against people based on their differences (gender, colour, culture, religion, lifestyle, political convictions, or whatever), the abuse of power or humiliation that is typical of sexual harassment will not be uncommon. Harassment is frequently linked to sexist attitudes and prejudice in general. Many women have been raised to believe that pleasing men is their ultimate calling, that being popular with men means success, or that makes a "genuine women look gorgeous." This can create the idea that they are open to sexual approaches at work, which is usually unintended. Some women, who perceive sexuality as their sole source of power, go along with it. Despite the fact that they are a small minority, their actions can inspire harassment of other women and this will tend to bring no change in the society as a whole.

➤ *Credibility and Victim Blaming-*

The vast majority of honest men who treat women with respect and would never consider abusing their position in this way find it impossible to comprehend that their respected colleagues would do so. The harasser may be a high-ranking or highly talented person who is difficult to replace, but the victim is likely to be a lower-ranking individual who is thus more replaceable. So, it becomes next to impossible for the low rank employee to make other people believe about the incident that happened (if any) with accuse the high rank employee, as other members blindly trust them.

➤ *Moral values, Divorce and cultural Differences-*

It becomes convenient or easier for people to engage in one-sided or mutual office flirtations at periods of moral laxity, when extramarital affairs and "one-night stands" are widely accepted, and when some people compare monogamy with monotony. The person who tries and doesn't accept rejection or sees the unwilling colleague as a challenge to easily harass others. Because of certain society's high rate of marital stress and divorce, some men and women arrive at work in a state of mental turmoil, making them prone to engage in sexual harassment.

➤ *Patriarchy and Sexual Exploitation*

Patriarchy exists, and it is the way the world is organised around gender - for the benefit of men. In its current existence, patriarchy brainwashes people into believing women are inferior to males. From beliefs, behaviours, practises, to ideas, the inferiority of women is ingrained in institutions and social practises. Sexual harassment is the primary sign of such a society and harassment, rape, prostitution, and femicide are all indicators of this power imbalance.

Disturbingly, boys and men are actually trained to have detrimental views about manhood, frequently to the damage of themselves, as well as women and girls. Men are encouraged to fit into a so-called "man-box," in which they are taught that they must be self-sufficient without asking for help, and that they must act tough even when they are terrified. Elements such as physical attractiveness, adherence to conventional masculine gender roles, heterosexuality, having as many sexual partners as possible, and hostility and control, are ingrained. But make no mistake, men are severely harmed. They lack emotional connection and nurturing, are frequently motivated to aggression, and their sense of self is mainly based on patriarchal laws.

It is this sense of self-worth, esteem, and belief about society and its norms to pushes many men to engage in the sexual exploitation of women. They feel that such behaviour is their right and perhaps find it as the only method to grow their worth and self-esteem. Working to bring about greater equality, respect, and appreciation for the opposing gender can significantly change this behavioural pattern.

V. INDIAN PENAL CODE AND SPECIAL LOCAL LAWS OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

In India's Constitution, the idea of gender equality is enshrined. The India State has adopted different laws and taken measures to ensure equal rights, combat social inequality, and prevent various forms of violence and atrocities in order to uphold and fulfil the Constitutional Mandate. Despite the fact that women might be victims of any general crime such as murder, robbery, or cheating, only crimes intended especially towards women, i.e., gender specific crimes, are classified as "crimes against women". Various new laws have been introduced, as well as revisions to existing laws, in order to achieve this goal and appropriately deal with these offences.

These are classified into two categories:

➤ *Crime under Indian Penal Code*

- Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)
- Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
- Kidnapping & Abduction for specified purposes (Sec. 363 -373 IPC)
- Torture - both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)
- Importation of girls (upto 21 years of age) (Sec. 366-B IPC)
- Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)
- Attempt to commit Rape (Sec 376/511 IPC)
- Insult to the Modesty of women (Sec. 509 IPC)

➤ *Crime Heads under the Special & Local Laws (SLL)*

- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- The Protection of women from domestic Violence Act, 2005
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act,1986

VI. TANGIBLE MEASURES

Other than legal methods, this paper also discusses several tangible measures that can be implemented by any and all members of the community to overcome this heinous situation.

- In order to prevent women from any kind of exploitation one has to make society aware of the high-handedness which has been prevailing in the country and raise voice if they see any women being exploited in front of them. The youth can organise campaigns regarding the same and deliver speeches in government schools, NGOs, private schools and in the society, they are living in.
- Even today women are not treated respectfully in their households and the head of the family imposes numerous restrictions. Conversely, all females should be treated equally and be given equal freedom as that of male members. This will make the female members feel confident and help them overcome their inferiority.
- Self-defence classes can be organized, such as schools can teach Karate lessons from classes 6 to 12. While

this is a defensive approach, it may still help put fear in men from making any sordid advances.

- Creating a healthy environment by refrain passing indecent comments, nasty gestures, where girls have to face no family pressure or any type of sexual harassment. Education, exposure and women empowerment can help bring down these exploitations.
- Governments and political parties should increase the number of women participating in politics.
- Laws should be made to ensure women should be paid equally as men to bring down discrimination and gender bias.
- Engineers can develop apps to report any kind of untoward instance taking place. Integrating such technology with local law enforcement, such as the police, would ensure immediate action.
- Police investigations in such cases should actively be monitored by higher authorities and the public, to ensure it is more accurate and faster because poor investigations and slow actions give the culprit enough time to escape or cover tracks.
- Establishment of small medical centres in [ac9] all major cities and towns is essential, which can act as one stop centres for medical treatments.
- Education of society about the equality of women is the most critical step. It should start from an early age and should include-
 - ✓ Providing information on the prevalence of sexual assault,
 - ✓ Debunking rape myths and sex-role stereotypes
 - ✓ Identifying risk-related behaviours
 - ✓ Increasing empathy for rape survivors
 - ✓ Providing information on the effects of rape on victims
- Strategies such as skill-building through reproductive health promotion which the capacity of individuals and couples to enjoy a satisfactory, healthy and safe sexual and reproductive life, with the absolute freedom to decide in a responsible and informed manner on the number and spacing of their children, which includes aspects of gender and violence prevention, programmes that work with families throughout the children's developmental stages, and work in school environments promoting equitable gender relations
- Identifying and analysing intrapersonal and interpersonal stressors, promoting strategies that discourage the use of alcohol and drugs by spreading awareness about the adverse effects it has on our health, correctly identifying and interpreting verbal hints that can help prevent middle and high school related sexual coercions and physical abuse.

VII. CONCLUSION

Males exist because of the female fraternity. After all, it is a woman who gives birth to new babies, nourishes and cares for them throughout their lives as a mother, sister, wife, and daughter. The old texts and history of Indian culture attest to the respect with which women ruled. With the passage of time, India's essential culture was eroded, and severe crime against women began.

Despite the fact that voices against women's violence have become increasingly louder in recent years, and the demand for women's empowerment and rights has gained traction from all corners of society, sweeping legal reforms are still required to put the perpetrators of women's crimes behind bars and subject them to harsh punishment in a timely manner.

Each and every problem has a solution. We should provide high-quality education to girls and boost women's empowerment to reduce women's exploitation. We should also provide them with opportunities to participate in active politics and social activities so that they can become more integrated into Indian society. All legislation pertaining to women's safety must be incorporated in the school curriculum. One of the most important things that can be done in this regard is to change society's narrow perspective about women, without which all laws and efforts in this direction will be ineffective.

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