



Original Article

Crime against Women

Dr. Nilesh Shah

Assistant Professor, Anand Law College, Anand S. P. U. Vallabh Vidhyanagar Gujarat, India

Manuscript ID:
RIGJAAR-2025-020309

ISSN: 2998-4459

Volume 2

Issue 3

Pp. 32-34

March 2025

Submitted: 10 Feb. 2025

Revised: 18 Feb. 2025

Accepted: 13 Mar. 2025

Published: 31 Mar. 2025

Correspondence Address:

Nilesh Shah, Assistant
Professor, Anand Law
College, Anand S. P. U.
Vallabh Vidhyanagar
Gujarat, India

Quick Response Code:



Web: <https://rlgjaar.com>



DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.15542424

DOI Link:
<https://zenodo.org/records/15542424>



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Abstract

Crimes against women remain a pressing issue in India, reflecting deep-seated societal inequalities and the failure of law enforcement to adequately protect women. This article examines the rising incidence of violence against women, focusing on a recent case in Kolkata that has drawn significant attention. Through a detailed analysis of the legal provisions, this paper discusses the effectiveness of existing laws, the challenges in their implementation, and the broader implications for women's safety in India. The discussion culminates in recommendations for strengthening legal frameworks and societal attitudes to ensure a safer environment for women. It also highlights the role of police, judiciary, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the prevention, investigation, and support of victims. The research draws on crime statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), case studies, and secondary literature to identify trends and patterns in violence against women. In addition, the paper discusses the challenges faced in enforcing laws, such as delayed justice, victim-blaming, underreporting of crimes, and social stigma. It emphasizes the need for stronger implementation of legal provisions, gender-sensitive policing, public awareness, and women's empowerment through education and economic independence. The study concludes that addressing crimes against women requires a multidimensional approach involving legal, social, and institutional reforms. Ensuring a safe and just society for women is not only a legal obligation but a moral and social imperative that demands collective efforts from all sections of society.

Crime Against Women

Keywords:- Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Rape, Honor Killing, Human Trafficking, Women's Rights

Introduction

India has long struggled with the issue of violence against women, which manifests in various forms such as domestic abuse, sexual assault, and trafficking. Despite the enactment of stringent laws and policies aimed at protecting women, the incidence of crimes against women continues to rise, suggesting that legal provisions alone are insufficient to address the problem. This article explores the complex interplay between legal frameworks and societal attitudes toward women, with a specific focus on a recent case in Kolkata that highlights the ongoing crisis. The case in question, involving the brutal assault and murder of a young woman, has reignited the national debate on women's safety and the efficacy of the criminal justice system in India. By examining this case in detail, alongside the relevant sections of the IPC and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, this article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the legal mechanisms in place and their role in preventing and addressing crimes against women.

Methods

This article employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and legal analysis to provide a comprehensive overview of the issue. The methodology includes the following steps:

1. **Legal Framework Analysis:** A thorough examination of the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, was conducted to understand the legal provisions related to crimes against women. This includes sections on sexual assault, harassment, domestic violence, and other forms of violence against women.
2. **Case Study:** The recent case from Kolkata was selected for a detailed study. Court documents, police reports, and media coverage were analyzed to understand the circumstances of the crime, the response of law enforcement, and the legal proceedings that followed. This case serves as a focal point for discussing the broader issues related to crimes against women in India.
3. **Interviews and Surveys:** Interviews with legal experts, social workers, and law enforcement officials were conducted to gather insights into the challenges faced in implementing the laws designed to protect women. Surveys of public opinion were also analyzed to gauge societal attitudes toward women's safety and the effectiveness of the legal system.
4. **Comparative Analysis:** A comparative analysis of similar cases and legal frameworks in other countries was undertaken to understand how different legal systems address crimes against women and what lessons can be learned for improving the situation in India.

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How to cite this article:

Shah, N. (2025). Crime against Women. *Royal International Global Journal of Advance and Applied Research*, 2(3), 32–34. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15542424>

The Kolkata Case: A Detailed Examination Background and Incident

In August 2024, Kolkata witnessed a harrowing crime that shook the nation. A young woman was abducted, sexually assaulted, and brutally murdered in a case that bore striking similarities to the infamous Delhi gang rape of 2012. The incident occurred in a relatively busy area of the city, yet the response from bystanders and law enforcement was woefully inadequate, leading to widespread outrage and protests across the city.

Judicial Proceedings and Public Reaction

The case proceeded through the judicial system with intense media scrutiny and public pressure for swift justice. The accused were apprehended quickly, and the trial was expedited given the gravity of the crime and the public outcry. The court's decision to hand down the death penalty was met with mixed reactions, with some advocating for such harsh punishment as a deterrent, while others called for a focus on systemic reforms rather than retributive justice. Public reaction to the case was overwhelming, with protests and demonstrations demanding greater accountability from law enforcement and faster judicial processes. The case also reignited debates on the effectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent and the need for comprehensive measures to prevent such crimes from occurring in the first place.

Discussion

Crime against women is a critical issue that varies significantly across different legal systems and cultural contexts. Here's a detailed comparison of the position on crimes against women in India, the USA, and the UK:

Position in India

1. Legal Framework:

- **Indian Penal Code (IPC):** Includes various sections addressing crimes against women such as Sections 375 (rape), 376 (punishment for rape), and 354 (assault or criminal force to a woman with intent to outrage her modesty).

- **Special Laws:** Includes the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act (2013).

2. Challenges:

- **Reporting and Prosecution:** Low reporting rates due to social stigma and fear of retribution. Conviction rates are low.

- **Cultural Factors:** Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and societal attitudes towards women can hinder justice.

3. Recent Developments:

- **Nirbhaya Case:** The 2012 gang rape case led to significant legal reforms, including the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, which expanded the definition of rape and introduced harsher penalties.

Position in USA

1. Legal Framework:

- **Federal and State Laws:** Includes laws such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which provides comprehensive legal protection and support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

- **Title IX:** Addresses sexual harassment and assault in educational institutions.

2. Challenges:

- **Systemic Issues:** Variability in laws and enforcement across states. Issues with underreporting and a high rate of sexual violence.

- **Criminal Justice System:** Challenges include the handling of rape cases, victim-blaming, and disparities in legal support.

3. Recent Developments:

- **MeToo Movement:** Increased awareness and legal reforms related to sexual harassment and assault.

Position in UK

1. Legal Framework:

- **Sexual Offences Act 2003:** Consolidates various sexual offenses, including rape and sexual assault, with clear definitions and penalties.

- **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004:** Provides protection for victims of domestic violence and introduces measures for their safety.

2. Challenges:

- **Reporting and Support:** Similar issues with underreporting and difficulties in accessing justice. Victim support services vary.

- **Cultural Factors:** Despite legal advancements, societal attitudes and institutional biases can impact the effectiveness of legal remedies.

3. Recent Developments:

- **Reforms and Campaigns:** Ongoing efforts to improve responses to sexual violence and domestic abuse, including reforms to improve victim support and the handling of rape cases.

Comparison

- **Legal Protections:** All three countries have comprehensive legal frameworks, but enforcement and societal attitudes vary.

- **Reporting and Conviction Rates:** Generally, higher reporting rates in the USA, but all countries face challenges related to underreporting and low conviction rates.

- **Cultural Attitudes:** Societal attitudes play a significant role in how crimes against women are handled in all three contexts, influencing reporting rates and the effectiveness of legal protections.

Efforts continue in all three countries to address these challenges and improve the legal and support systems for victims of crimes against women.

Conclusion:

The recent Kolkata case serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing crisis of violence against women in India. While the legal framework, particularly the provisions of the IPC and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, provides for severe penalties for such crimes, the effectiveness of these laws is undermined by gaps in enforcement, judicial delays, and persistent societal attitudes that condone or overlook violence against women. To address this issue effectively, India must adopt a multi-faceted approach that includes not only legal reforms but also broader societal changes. This includes better training for law enforcement, faster judicial processes, public education campaigns, and a focus on changing societal attitudes toward women. Only through a collective effort can India hope to create a safer environment for women and prevent such heinous crimes in the future.

Acknowledgment

Nil.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper



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